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LIFE'S SORROWS.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

When I gaze back to the years that have flown
Like fairy ships on a calm summer sea,
And see that the pathway once rose-betwined
Has nothing but thorns and leaves left for me,
I feel the springtime of life ne'er returns,
Though the sorrowing heart in anguish yearns.
When the clouds of the present thick with gloom
Blot the guiding-star that directs our course,
And hope's heavenly blossoms have ceased to bloom,
And feelings of joy are turned to morose;
Life loses the charm it once held in store,
And the world-weary soul, oppressed and sore,
But life has its shades, and life has its light,
And if its duties are done no regret
Need come to us like a withering blight,
No moments arise we'd wish to forget;
Though the pathway is drear as deserts vast,
Endurance will scatter fresh roses at last.
Then if we gaze back to years that have flown,
We need not pine 'neath the present in grief,
Yet the heart will doubly feel when alone,
With none to share or give comfort's relief;
If on the promise of hope we depend,
Life's sorrows will turn to joys in the end.

RED ROB.

The Boy Road-Agent.

BY OIL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "BOWIE KNIFE
BEN," "OLD HURRICANE," "HAWKEYE
HARRY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

THE CENTAUR.

THE idea of Asa Sheridan, the miner, being Red Rob seemed preposterous; and yet Alviso's announcement fell like a lightning-bolt upon the agent. He glanced at the interpreter, then at the unsuspecting object of his emotions, seeming totally undecided as to what course he should pursue. His first impulse, however, was to take advantage of the Mexican's revelation and secure the notorious young outlaw. But a second thought dismissed the first. He passed the book back to Alviso and consulted his thoughts.

Red Rob, the Boy Road-agent, had, for two years, been a terror to New Mexico; and his name was spoken in fear by some, in praise by others. He had been termed a modern Claude Duval with but a single exception, that of his age. Red Rob had never been represented over eighteen years of age; although none of his victims could be found that had ever seen his face; he always went in disguise.

It was the rich that feared him, for the poor had nothing that he wanted, and so they rested in comparative ease. Deeds of heroism, daring adventure, acts of kindness to emigrant parties, had won for him a kind of a terrible fascination.

If Sheridan was Red Rob, Miller could see no reason why he was called the Boy Road-agent, for he was a man in years. This gave him reason to believe that Alviso was mistaken in the man's identity; and yet, there were hopes of his being correct, for the Mexican was acquainted with all the different characters in the territory.

Heretofore all attempts to capture the young mountain bandit had proved fruitless. Miller knew this; and, as he gazed upon the handsome face and athletic form of young Sheridan, and measured his probable strength, he wondered what success would attend an attempt to arrest him, and whether or not the old man Walraymond and Nathan Wolfe were his companions in outlawry.

The rustle of a bush and the soft, light tread of hooved feet not far away, arrested the agent's attention. In an instant every one of the group turned in the direction of the sound to behold a human face peering at them over a low bush. It was a man's face—aged and wrinkled, and covered with an immense yellow hair, fully two feet in length. The hair was also long, grizzled and disheveled. Neither hair nor cap was upon his head. There was a vacant expression in the great bearded face, a wild, unearthly glare in the dark, sunken eyes.

The man stood about two rods away, where the extremity of the light, blended with the shadows, created a dim twilight. His body was concealed behind a bush, and, judging by the height of this, he was of low stature. For several moments the party regarded the stranger with a look of silent awe.

Nathan Wolfe seemed more agitated than any. He seemed to recognize the countenance. Miller, first to break the silence, cried: "Who comes there?"

The man made no response, but turning his head glanced from side to side, then resumed his vacant stare toward the fire.

The agent challenged him again, but no response.

Then Miller drew his revolver. "Answer, or I'll fire," he said, and he raised the weapon.

Still no response from the stony-faced intruder.

The agent pressed the trigger and the report of his pistol crashed through the night. He did not aim at the man's head, but above it, hoping to frighten him and elicit a response.

Scarcely had the reverberations of the pistol-shot started the forest echoes, ere the form of an animal spring from behind the very bush where the man stood, and stopped within the full glare of the light.

An exclamation of involuntary horror burst from every lip. An awful apparition stood before them.

Upon the body of the animal was a human head and face—the same bearded face that had stared at them over the bush!



On the body of the animal was a human head and face—the same bearded face that had stared over the bush!

There was no doubting the evidence of their eyes—it was no delusion—no mental phantom, but a living, moving animal, with the head and face of a man!

It stood within the full glow of the camp-fire and glared at them.

Every man recoiled with an involuntary shudder of vague horror. The face of the Mexican became ghastly, and his teeth chattered as with an ague fit.

"Ay, señor!" he gasped, seizing Miller by the arm, while his staring eyes were fixed upon the unnatural monster. "It is it, señor—the devil—Centaur—half-human, half-beast!"

There was no reply. Every eye was still fixed upon the creature whose gaze seemed possessed of a diabolical fascination—a fascination that they could not repel.

However preposterous it seemed to them, there was no denying the living fact. The proof was the creature itself—there before them a terrible living horror—the form of a deer with a human face and head. The long, yellow beard hung low upon the breast, and the long, grizzled hair straggled in disordered masses about the neck; while those awful, stony-looking eyes, glaring out at them from beneath their massive brows in the wavering, garish light, seemed to dart rays of hellish enchantment into the souls of the astonished men.

A raven suddenly croaked near by. It broke the awful spell, and the monster turned its bearded face and bounded away into the gloom.

Half a minute had seemed an hour.

The monster left the party speechless. Walraymond was the first to speak.

"Age of wonders—monsters," he spoke in a calm, natural tone.

"Yes, it beats me—it beats all of us," said the Indian agent.

"Certainly, certainly," mused Walraymond, reflectively. "Surely we are not living in the age of fables—centuries in advance of time. Surely that mass rising yonder into the clouds cannot be old Mount Olympus."

"No, by heavens, Walraymond!" exclaimed young Sheridan, whose clear, metallic voice dispelled the silent terror left hanging over the camp; "you are living in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and seventy-one."

Walraymond turned to Miller, and said:

"What do you understand by that apparition, commandant?"

"It's a mystery."

"Your opinion then?"

"I saw the body of an animal, not unlike that of a deer, with a human head—I saw those as plain as I see you. This is all; I can form no idea in regard to it—it's a mystery."

"It's as I tell you, señor. It's a Centaur. They have dwelt in the valley of the *del los Pinos*, these many, many centuries."

The Mexican was superstitious. He spoke in a solemn, earnest tone—almost fiercely.

Miller recalled the many strange stories he had heard of this mysterious band—stories which had come down through centuries in traditions. He remembered hearing an old Navajo tell something of a strange race of people with bodies like animals, that dwelt in the valley of some of the San Juan tributaries; but he accepted the story as one of the legends of the country, and thought no more about it until that moment.

James Miller was an old soldier; a man of education, and one of the last to give credence to stories that find their origin in superstition. But what was he to believe now—how was he to dispose of the monster? He had seen it move, and knew it was no optical delusion—nothing spiritual, but a tangible object of the material world. Perhaps he was in a frame of mind that was not calculated to repel the conviction forced so suddenly upon him. The deep solitude of the place, the gloom of night, the weird sounds coming, as it were, from out the realms of Nowhere, and the revelation that Alviso had just made concerning Sheridan—all these, perhaps, contributed in overcoming his incredulities of all appertaining to the mysterious. Nothing betrays uneasiness and vague, restless fear so quick as the depressing influence of gloom and solitude, and the stoutest heart and bravest mind can no more dispel them from the breast than they can the shadows of night from around them. There is an awful resemblance between death and darkness. The horrors of the one are in the shadows of the other.

"And now your opinion, Walraymond?" the agent said, turning to the old man.

"It must be as your Mexican friend says. Nothing under the sun is impossible, especially in New Mexico. Yes, sir, seeing a thing should be all the evidence wanted. No one can see for another as well as he can for himself. But, after all, the creature seemed harmless."

"It is harmless," replied Nathan Wolfe, terribly agitated, and apparently troubled.

"Señor," said Alviso, "do not be deceived in the Centaur. These deserted valleys and pueblos bear the hoof-prints of those ancient demons—are mute witnesses of the bloody work of the Centaurs."

Miller saw that the unnatural fear which leads to superstition was getting the better of himself and men, and so he at once dismissed the subject; and as a preclusion to further excitement, wrapped his blanket around him and laid down to rest, pillow his head in the hollow of his saddle.

A soldier and one of the miners were detailed to take the first watch. The rest of the party followed the agent's example, and were soon asleep on the ground.

The camp-fire burned low. The coyotes chattered nearer—the pinons rustled softly in the night wind. The watchers, stationed under the darkness, kept their silent ward.

The near crack of rifles, the whiz of bullets and "whirr" of arrows suddenly told them of lurking dangers. The sleepers all started from their sleep, but Agent Miller. He slept on.

Every man grasped his rifle, expecting an attack. But they were happily disappointed. No foes appeared. Alviso crept away into the shadows to reconnoiter.

Ben Thomas turned to Miller, who still slept on. Thomas spoke to him, but he stirred not. He bent over him and shook him—lightly at first, then vigorously. Still he could not rouse the sleeper.

Thomas drew aside the blanket from the agent's face, upon which the light now shone. He was lying upon his left side. His eyes were closed, his lips slightly parted and wreathed in a faint smile that seemed the expression of a pleasant dream. A dark line ran diagonally across the man's brow. Thomas looked closer, and saw it was the track of blood! Then he started up and cried out:

"My God, Miller is dead!"

And he spoke the truth. A bullet of one of the unseen foes had struck the agent on the top of the head, passed downward behind the eye, producing instant death. He had not moved a muscle nor uttered a word.

A gloom darker than the shades of night fell upon the party. The death of the agent was a terrible blow to his friends and country. And to still add to this loss and sad state of affairs, Alviso returned to camp with the startling information that a large party of Utes was in the valley—that they had stolen every animal but a single one, and that to stay there would be to court certain death.

Upon a hasty consultation, it was decided to abandon the camp at once. A messenger was dispatched on the only remaining horse to Fort Defiance, with the news of Miller's death.

Under the somber pinons, where the San Juan Mountains keep their eternal watch, James H. Miller, the soldier and Christian, was laid to rest. A grave had been hollowed out with one of the miner's spades, the body wrapped in a blanket and lowered into the grave.

When the last shovelful of dirt was placed over the dead, all turned toward Walraymond, who had unassumingly taken charge of the burial. The glare of a pine torch lit up the scene—the mound of fresh earth, the silent figures around it, their faces looking ghostly in the dim, uncertain glow of the wavering light, and the most conspicuous of all, the majestic form of Basil Walraymond, with bare head, and his long, venerable beard looking hoary in the dusky shadows.

A dead calm fell upon the little party. The old man lifted his eyes toward heaven—his lips moved—he was praying. His voice was

* A real incident.

low and tremulous at first, but finally swelled out clear and strong and solemn as the tones of a funeral bell. His whole frame shook with the intensity of his emotions, as, with all the fervency of his great, noble soul, he lifted his voice to heaven in behalf of the soul of the departed man.

It was a wild, weird and solemn scene.

Asa Sheridan watched and listened in breathless silence, his whole soul seemingly absorbed by the solemn words of the speaker. A mist gathered over his eyes, and something came up in his throat and almost choked him. Was it remorse? Did the humble supplication of the old man recall something of the forgotten past?—reach his heart?

When Walraymond had concluded his prayer, Sheridan turned to Wolfe, and said, in a low tone:

"Strange, mysterious, noble old man! From whence came he?—who is he?—what is he? Wolfe, I'd give all the wealth of New Mexico, if I possessed it, for answers to these questions."

"Soldiers, what do you propose to do now?" It was the old man who spoke, in his full, rich tone.

"We will have to return to the fort;—but you?"

"I shall follow those Indians."

"I, too," said Sheridan.

"And I," added Wolfe.

"Our time is not our own," said Ben Thomas. "It belongs to our country. But for this we would accompany you."

"Do your duty, soldiers," said the old man, solemnly. "We may meet again some time, so good-by."

He shook hands with the soldiers, took up his rifle, and turned to leave.

The wind stirred the branches above, the leaves rustled mournfully.

Then the wall of darkness around them seemed to give birth to a hundred spirits of evil. A hundred shadowy figures floated out of the gloom into the light of the camp-fire.

They were savages. The war-whoop of the Utes burst upon the silent night—echoed and re-echoed among the mountain caverns, and rolled along in quivering intonation through the valley.

Sheridan, Wolfe and the soldiers fled into the forest gloom. Basil Walraymond alone remained to contend with the savage horde.

His giant form, rendered conspicuous by his white beard and gray hair, towered above the seething mass around him—a grand, majestic soul, struggling with the legions of darkness.

He discharged his rifle at the foremost Indian. The red-skin fell dead. Then he clubbed his weapon. With the first blow the stock was shattered, but it left him with a deadlier missile—the heavy iron barrel, which crushed and tore its way through the ranks of the foe.

The old man stood his ground. The savages fell away before him. He was a pivot around which the deadly gun-barrel swept like an iron arm whirled by some irresistible power.

From the darkness of the woods, young Sheridan and Nathan Wolfe saw the danger of their old friend, the heroic, mysterious Basil Walraymond.

They loved the old man—they resolved he should not fall alone. They rushed back, and side by side with him, fought the yelling, frenzied horde.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIOUS RESCUERS.

OCTAVIA was scarcely out of hailing-distance of the train, when the restless eyes of her brother, Major St. Kenelm, discovered a dark cloud rise suddenly upon the northern horizon and sweep along the plain. He knew at once it was not a storm-cloud, but a cloud surcharged with more deadly elements; and as it approached, it gradually resolved itself into distinct objects—each object a horse and rider.

The riders were all readily recognized as Indians. The emigrants could see their plumes swaying in the breeze about their heads, and their polished spear-heads flashing in the sun.

"They are Arapahoes, boys," said young Boswell, who had brought a field-glass to bear upon the moving mass; "look, major, for yourself."

St. Kenelm took the glass, and having scanned the party for a moment, exclaimed:

"Danger is coming, friends—perhaps death! Every man to his post—we will have to fight! Ho, teamsters! throw your wagons into a square, that we may have a temporary barricade, and secure your animals. Be quick, men, for Heaven's sake! This way, two of you; help me man the Silent Friend!"

Two men followed him to the rear wagon, which, being covered like the others, no one would have guessed was an artillery wagon. But such was the case. The party had improvised a gun-carriage out of a common wagon, and mounted a small brass howitzer upon it. The weapon had been kept concealed by the tilt, which was kept securely closed all around. It was spoken of only as the "Silent Friend."

The major and his two friends entered the inclosed gun-carriage, unloosened the canvas so as to be thrown aside in an instant, and then loaded the gun with a solid shot.

Major St. Kenelm had seen service as an artilleryman, and had no doubt of his ability to handle the gun with precision.

"Now let them venture within five hundred yards," he said, calmly.

"But, major, look out here!" cried Harry Gilbert, running up in great excitement; "there comes another party of horsemen from the south."

The gunners looked in the direction indicated, and sure enough, saw another party of horsemen sweeping toward them. They were about the same distance away that the other party was. St. Kenelm examined them with the glass.

"Boys, we are doomed! They are Kiowas!" He spoke in a deep, husky tone. By this time the mules and horses had been secured. The women were huddled together behind the barricade of wagons, trembling with a violent terror.

Every man and boy, black and white, stood with rifle in hand ready for the affray. A pallor was upon each face, but it was that pallor with which the brave meet death. A fierce determination burned in each eye.

"The Arapahoes are the strongest," said St. Kenelm; "perhaps one volley from our rifles, followed by one shot from the cannon, will check their advance. We can then meet the Kiowas with our rifles and a discharge of grape."

In the mean time great excitement prevailed among the women. The absence of Octavia was known to all, and the general belief that she was in imminent danger caused great uneasiness. Old Aunt Shady was nearly distracted, and refused, like Rachael, of old, to be comforted.

"Do not grieve, Aunt Shady," said the kind-hearted Maggie Boswell. "Octavia may be the only one of us that'll escape."

"Oh, Miss Maggie, I jist know she'll be murdered and den killed by den awful Ingings!" wailed the old negress. "If we's killed, den de poor young ting 'll be wusser off dan ebber. Oh, my Octaby! whod' take keer ob her den? Oh, honey! dis world's jist full ob sin blacker dan my face. It'll brake my heart—I jist can't stand it—oh, Lor', I'll jist die!"

And her fat form shook like an aspen under the intensity of her grief.

"But, Aunt Shady," persisted Maggie, with tears in her eyes, "Octavia may be—"

"Hush, child—honey dear!" interrupted the old negress; "de Shady habn't libed dis fifty years fur nuffin'. She know what danger an—she see de awful war 'n de South—she see'd—Oh, Lor', save my soul!"

The last exclamation was occasioned by the sudden, thunderous crash of the cannon, that shook the earth till Aunt Shady fairly bounced. She stuffed her chubby fingers into her ears, and looking up at her friends with a lugubrious wail, cried out:

"Childrens, let's pray."

The shot fired at the approaching Arapahoes was not without effect. It plowed its way through the ranks of the foe, filling them with terror and consternation. This was a reception they had never expected to meet with from an emigrant train. Had they known that the party possessed a cannon, it is doubtful whether they would have made the attack; for, of all things, the Indian has the greatest terror of a cannon.

The shot put a check to the advance of the Arapahoes, but the Kiowas kept straight on toward the train, as if exerting every effort to reach it in advance of the Arapahoes.

The emigrants held their fire until the Kiowas were within fifty paces, then the cannon belched forth its leaden hail and was succeeded by volley after volley, in rapid succession, from the deadly Winchester. The carnage was fearful; more than a score of savages were unhorsed. A dozen ponies dashed wildly in every direction over the plain—some with reeling, tottering riders, others riderless entirely.

The animals of several of the Kiowas became unmanageable with affright, and dashed up to the very muzzles of the repeaters that were still pouring forth an almost continual stream of fire and lead.

The Arapahoes saw this fearless movement of their neighbors, and supposing it was made out of sheer bravery, determined not to be outdone by them, and rallying, bore down again to the scene of conflict.

This encouraged the Kiowas, who, maddened by their terrible loss, charged the emigrants, with all the savage vengeance of their souls thrown into their unceasing yell. But our friends were ready for this combined onset. The cannon, loaded almost to the muzzle, belched across the plain, and was immediately followed by the discharge of the rifles.

The ranks of the foe were nearly swept away. The slaughter of men and horses was frightful; but the survivors pressed on and drove the gunners from the cannon—back in side of their frail defense of wagons.

Yells of triumph now issued from the redskins' lips, for, although dearly purchased, victory seemed within their grasp.

A scene that defies description now followed this first advantage of the foe. Above the tumult of the battle rose the cries and screams of the terrified women, the wild braying of the frightened mules, and the shouts of the defenders.

But, suddenly, above the din of all, the wild clangor of a horn rung out, and a score of white horsemen charged like madmen upon the savages and put them to rout.

And the emigrant train was saved!

Away over the plain in all directions scattered the defeated savages in the wildest disorder, and on in swift pursuit swept the white horsemen, the clangor of the horn, the report of pistols and the shouts of the men ringing out in triumph on the air.

Eagerly our friends watched the wild pursuit, and anxiously they awaited the return of those unknown men, to whom they were indebted for their lives and all they possessed. But they waited in vain. The mysterious horsemen swept away out of sight and were seen no more.

Fearful as the conflict had been, and great as was the savages' loss, the victory of our friends was almost bloodless and without loss. Two men only had been wounded, but one of these severely; and three mules had broken from the corral and escaped.

The greatest fears of Octavia's safety were now entertained. A large number of the defeated redskins had fled toward Conejos and as they were not being pursued, they would, in all probability, overtake the maiden.

They dare not weaken the defensive force of the train by sending out men in search of her. They were afraid the Indians might rally and renew the attack, and between the two extremities, moments of agonizing suspense and fear held the party inactive.

Old Aunt Shady waddled to and fro, wringing her hands in the bitterest despair and bewailing the unknown fate of her young mistress.

A riderless pony, with smoking flanks and steaming sides, suddenly dashed up the road from the direction of Conejos.

All recognized the animal—it was Octavia's.

Sadness and deepest sorrow fell upon every heart.

What was to be done! Evening was coming on, and Conejos was fully four miles away, now lost in the shadows of the grim old mountain beyond.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW CHARACTER ON THE STAGE.

OCTAVIA ST. KENELM was in peril. The very danger which she might have escaped, and which was threatened her friends, befell her. She rode back until the train was in sight, and was a witness to the conflict. She saw the savages charging down upon her friends. She saw the cannon belch its death-hail across the plain. She heard the yells of the savages and the shouts of her friends. Still she kept on. In the awful tumult of battle there was some horrible fascination that led her on closer and closer to the train. Her attention was divided between the conflict and that little band of horsemen sweeping across the plain. She was satisfied they were rangers, and, that that gallant, handsome boy was their leader. She could see him at their head—she saw him sweep down upon the redskins and put them to flight. Then her young heart throbbed with the wildest joy, and its love went out in silent admiration and thanks for the noble deed of the noble boy and his followers.

Octavia's eyes swam in a mist of tears as she watched the flying Indians and pursuing rangers; and when they at last singled out one form among the many, they followed it so closely that she failed to notice the approach of two savages—a Kiowa and Arapaho—until escape was impossible.

The Arapaho dashed alongside of her and seized her pony's reins, while the Kiowa rode up, and seizing the terrified girl around the waist, dragged her from her animal's back, and threw her across the withers of his own in front of him.

Octavia's pony became so unmanageable that the Arapaho was compelled to release his hold, when it dashed away down the road.

The two Indians turned southward and galloped away with their fair, helpless captive. Both were young men, and chiefs of their tribes. They were the leaders of the defeated bands then flying in every direction across the plain.

They rode on in silence for nearly a mile, when they were joined by several warriors—about an equal number of each tribe. Among the Kiowas was a white renegade.

The warriors were highly elated over their leaders' success in capturing the beautiful girl. It compensated them, in a measure, for their recent terrible loss; yet these warriors little dreamed of the struggle going on in each chief's breast.

The whole party moved on at a slow, wearisome gallop, and when they had journeyed something near five miles, it became necessary for them to halt and rest their overtaxed animals.

Octavia was lifted to the ground, but she was so weak and terrified that she could not stand without support. So a blanket was placed upon the sword, and she sat down upon it and burst into tears. For the first time in her young and happy life her heart was bowed in trouble and fear.

The young Kiowa chief stood upon one side of her with folded arms, gazing upon her with that pride so thoroughly characteristic of the savage. The Arapaho stood on the other side, looking none the less proud of the lovely prize.

At length the "pent-up Ute" that had been surging in these barbarians' breasts burst forth.

"The dark-eyed maiden will be a beautiful ornament in Long Lance's lodge."

It was the Kiowa who spoke.

"But that will do the loige of Red Hawk no good," said the Arapaho, manifesting a disposition to dispute the Kiowa's right to the maiden.

"When the Kiowas and the Arapahoes go on the war-path together, the Kiowas do not claim the scalps the Arapahoes take."

"The Kiowa chief speaks the truth, and the white maiden is Red Hawk's captive. He was the first to catch her pony."

"And Long Lance captured the maiden. The pony is the Arapaho's, the maiden the Kiowa's," replied the sagacious Long Lance.

"When the Arapaho shoots an enemy, does the Kiowa steal the scalp?"

This retort was as stinging as it was significant, and the eyes of the young Arapaho blazed as he spoke. The spirit of the Kiowa was fired by the cutting sarcasm of his friend, and the two were as ready to fight each other as they had been to fight the whites a few hours previous. In fact, it was evident now that nothing but a conflict would decide the claim to the maiden; and if the dispute was forced to this extremity, the fight would be a bloody and desperate one; for, of course, the friends of each would participate, and these were about equal in point of number.

The prize was one not likely to be yielded without a struggle, and the dispute waxed warm between the young chiefs. Hot words were flung at each other, and sinister eyes blazed with a consuming fire of resentment.

Octavia sat shivering with fear. She could not understand what the disputants said, but their violent gestures, blazing eyes and fierce, contorted faces told her that something terrible was about to occur. She watched the movements of the two chiefs, and when at length one of them drew his tomahawk, she felt certain it was to be buried in her brain.

But, when she saw the white renegade hitherto spoken of, step between the enraged chiefs, something of the real truth dawned upon her, and a fearful load was lifted from her heart. She now became satisfied that the white man was endeavoring to effect a bloodless adjustment of the dispute, and by the gradual contractions of the scowls of rage and the terrible blaze of the eyes, she knew that he would succeed.

The chiefs sheathed their weapons and their men fell back.

Then the renegade turned to Octavia and explained the situation to her; informing her that, to avert an appeal to arms, the chiefs had, at his suggestion, agreed to let the maiden decide the question herself: that is, say which one she considered her captor.

"Between two evils of equal magnitude there is no choice," was the maiden's cool reply.

"The lamb can certainly have no choice as to which wolf devours it."

"I know," replied the renegade, "but you'd better say which, and save a bloody mess."

"You have my decision—both are demons at heart," she replied, a little fiercely.

The outlaw turned to the young chiefs and explained her decision, when the old fire at once began to blaze up in their eyes.

"See here, redskins," said the renegade, who really desired to avoid a conflict, "the horses of the chiefs are strong and swift; let their speed determine the question and stop this fussin'. Do you see that pine out yander?"

He pointed out a tree that stood about a hundred rods south of them on the level plain, solitary and alone.

The chiefs answered in the affirmative.

"Do you see yan grove back thar?" and the white man pointed to a dense clump of pines about fifty rods to their right.

The chiefs answered with a nod of their plumed heads.

"Wal, now," continued the peacemaker, "let the bone of contention—that's the gal—be tied to that tree, then let the chiefs mount their horses and light out, startin' from the edge of yan grove. Then the one that beats to tree, and lays his hands on the gal's head fust, takes the ante—that's the gal."

"The head of White Coyote is deep with wisdom; Red Hawk is willing," said the Arapaho, promptly, for he felt satisfied that his pony was the fastest, and was anxious to be first in accepting the proposition; for then there would be no alternative, under the code of savage honor, but for the Kiowa to submit to the ordeal. This the latter did, in brief terms:

"Long Lance will run with the Arapaho."

This seemed to afford general satisfaction, since the compromise was likely to prove a source of no little pleasant excitement. Horseracing under any circumstances is a favorite amusement of all those South-western Indians; but the prize for which the two chiefs were now about to run made the occasion especially exciting.

The renegade made known to the captive the manner in which the dispute was to be settled. He then assisted her to rise, and placing her upon the back of a pony, started toward the lone tree upon the prairie, accompanied by two warriors.

While Octavia was being conducted to the winning goal, the whole party moved down close to the grove before mentioned, and the two young chiefs prepared themselves for the race. They stripped off every garment except their loin-cloths; removed their head-gearing and tied their long scalp-locks close down to their heads, so that not a hair would impede the speed of their animals.

They next stripped their animals of everything but the bridles, which consisted of a hair-bill and rein. The ponies were strong-limbed and fiery fellows; and each one, in the tribe to which he belonged, bore the reputation of being fast. This made each party confident of victory.

Octavia was taken to the tree and bound to its trunk in an upright position. A lairai was passed several times around her body, between her feet and neck, and the trunk of the tree, so that she could scarcely move a muscle. Thus secured, the renegade and two savages went back to the starting point, and poor Octavia found herself alone in a situation that well-nigh drove her mad. There were no hopes for escape, and as she pondered over her situation, a new fear took possession of her mind. Knowing how treacherous the savages were, she felt that it was no more than probable that the one beaten in the race would bury a tomahawk in her brain.

With eyes swimming in tears of agony, she watched the group of savages. She saw the chiefs mount their animals and turn, facing down toward her. She saw the savages part on either side of their men; she saw the renegade step out to one side and elevate the muzzle of a rifle in the air. She saw a little cloud of smoke puff out from the weapon—a sharp, splitting report crashed through the air—a savage yell followed, and the racers shot away over the plain!

At the same instant a terrible yell of surprise and the discharge of rifles told the two racers that something was not right behind; but they would not, they dared not, glance back to inquire the cause of the alarm. One movement—the turning of the head—might lose either one the race. But they were not long to remain ignorant of the cause of the wild confusion which they knew was not occasioned by their excitement over the race, for close behind them a voice, mingled with the clatter of other hoofs than their own animals', suddenly rung out, clear and distinct:

"Clear the track, smoky-skins, for hyar we come a-boomin'!"

The next instant a horse and rider shot past them like an arrow!

The man had dashed from the grove behind the savages, the instant the signal for the start was given the chiefs, and all recognized in him a terrible foe. The chiefs uttered a cry of horror as he passed them, and with the desperation of madmen urged on their ponies. The race was not now between the two savages, but between the savages on the one side and an implacable foe on the other.

This foe was a person well advanced in years, with a small, little form, clothed in the buckskin of a borderman. His bearded face was thin and wrinkled; and his sharp chin and long Roman nose lacked but a hair's-breadth, so to speak, of forming a natural bridge over a wide, bearded mouth.

The horse this man bestrode was as antiquated in looks as himself, but its speed was something wonderful to behold.

As the man shot by the astonished chiefs he turned his face, that was clothed in a broad, comical smile, and gave utterance to a defiant shout.

He reached the tree a hundred yards or so in advance of the savages, and drew up by Octavia's side.

"Stiddy, gal, stiddy!" he exclaimed, whipping out a long knife. "I've won the race, arn't I? You're mine, by the rampin' tigers! Up here, now; you're free!—quick, my good gal, and you're safe! There! away, old mare. In to it now—peg it down, Patience—scat!"

It had required but an instant for him to cut the captive's bonds, another to lift her to a seat before him, and then away he went, while the Indians, with a fearful war-whoop, thundered on past the tree, in pursuit.

"Good-by, smoky-skins," the reckless old borderman shouted back to his pursuers; "if you ketch us, you'll be the fust that ever laid it across ole Dakota Dan, the great Triangle, jist fresh down from the crisp Nor'-west!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 266.)

ROUSSEAU once wrote, "If it were only necessary for you to hold out your thumb in order to cause the death of an immensely wealthy mandarin in China, whose heir you would be, are you sure that you would not extend your thumb?" This passage one day attracted the attention of Henri de Lacrois, a young Frenchman of excellent family, but whose brain had been a little affected by the loss of his fortune. He thought, "If I could stretch out my thumb, and that would be enough to kill my uncle and cousin, I should become very rich." In a sort of hallucination, he extended his arm toward the photographs of his relations, and said, "Let them die, so that I may inherit." Fifteen days later his uncle and his cousin were carried off by typhoid fever. Within the last six months remorse preyed upon Lacrois' enfeebled intellect, and he imagined that his spell caused the death of his relatives. He heard voices from all sides of his room calling, "Thou hast killed us! Thou hast killed us!" He delivered himself up to the police and asked to be executed. He died a few days ago in an insane asylum.

THE POET'S PRAYER.

BY HARVEY HOWARD.

Oh, God, why hast thou given me
This longing, deep within my heart,
For fame, for honor—in the thoughts
Of all the world to make a part?

And having given me this fierce,
This mad desire for love and fame,
Tell me why to my longing heart
No power to gratify it came!

Oh, I would speak to all mankind,
Would speak; but how my soul would spurn
To speak as all speak! Let me frame
These living thoughts in words that burn!

Let me so speak that those who hear,
Enraptured, may forget the doom
That hangs o'er man; may learn to look
To that bright Land beyond the tomb.

Teach me to others to impart
The love which thou hast given me
For These and man; teach me to show
That love of life is love of Thee.

Teach me—Thou hast, already, taught
That love wins love; that earth is bright
To those who love to live—to those
Whose eyes have learned to see aright!

But teach me whom Thou hast taught
To guide my brother's eye to thee;
Make this my task, until my bonds
Have been unloosed, and I am free!

Overland Kit:

OR,
THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF
DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

THE ROAD-AGENTS.

THE BRANCHES of the pines clouded in the canyon, from their precarious footholds far up on the cliff-tops; they surged wildly in the ever-constant breeze that swept down along the valley.

On a level with the rude path which wound through the canyon, was a dark, ugly cavity in the side of the cliff, some six feet high by three wide. It was as if by some sudden and terrible convulsion of nature, the massive rock had been forced open.

One, pausing and looking with curiosity into the dark cavity, would have seen that the opening only extended in some ten feet, yet this dark cavity, apparently barred by massive rocks beyond, was the entrance to the cave which served Overland Kit and his band of road-agents for a head-quarters.

The cave itself was some twenty feet square. Through a hole in the roof, as big round as a barrel, came a stream of light which dimly illuminated the cavern.

Three rude couches of fragrant pine branches, over which were spread folded blankets, and a few cooking utensils, comprised the furniture of the robbers' retreat.

In one corner stood two horses. The road-agents and their steeds shared the same apartment.

Extended on the fragrant couches lay two brawny men. Their rough appearance, the revolvers strapped to their waists, and their general look told that they were members of Overland Kit's notorious band.

"'Bout time for the cap'n, isn't it?" asked the taller of the bandits, who answered to the name of Joe Rain.

"Yes," replied the other, who was called Jimmy Mullen.

"We had a pretty narrow squeeze last night; the blue-coats came within an ace of gathering us in. I thought that the captain was done for, sure."

"There's an old saying, you know, about the man that's born to be hanged—"

"Yes, exactly; that applies to us, too, it strikes me."

"We're all in the same boat. We'll have to keep our eyes skinned now, for the hull country will be arter us. I s'pose the cap'n has gone to see what new dodge is up."

"Yes; I don't think, though, that all the soldiers between here and the Missouri river will be able to hunt us out of this hole."

"Your head's level thar!" exclaimed Jimmy. "This is the snugest hiding-place in all the Reese river valley."

"The cap'n disskivered it hunting arter a b'ar, didn't he?" Joe asked.

"Yes; he wounded the critter in the canyon an' he run in hyer; the cap'n's blood were up an' he follered him in. Not being able to find the critter in the cleft of the rock, he natural'y came to the conclusion that Mr. Bar had a hole inside, somehow, which he had crept in to."

He had some matches in his pocket, so he jist struck a light and proceeded to examine. Sure enough, he found the hole which leads in hyer. 'Twan't half as big then as it is now, for when the cap'n selected this for a head-quarters, he saw at once that he would have to have some place to keep the horses, in case the soldiers were chus' at our heels any time when we run into the canyon. So he jist set to work with a pick and made the hole big enough to get a horse through. Why, it would puzzle Old Nick himself to smell us out now. The horses' hoofs don't leave any mark on the loose stones in the canyon, an' one would as soon believe that the animals had flown right up out of the canyon as to look for their inside of the cleft rock beyond."

"They hadn't hunted us much yet, but it 'pears to me that now they will go for us all they know how," Joe said, thoughtfully.

"Shouldn't be surprised," replied the other; "I think it's 'bout time to quit. We've made enough already; enough to make us all gentlemen, East; why, we kin live like fighting-cocks."

"There's a big reward offered for the cap'n," Joe observed, with a peculiar expression in his voice, and he cast a covert glance at Jimmy from under his bushy eyebrows.

"Ware hawk there, pard!" exclaimed the other, guessing at Joe's meaning at once. "Overland Kit is like a weasel; he'll never be taken asleep, and the chances are ten to one that if he could be captivated, he'd get out of it afore they tightened the rope around his neck. It would take a derned sight more money than is offered for his hide now, to make me risk my precious carcass in attempting to take him. He's jist chain-lightning with his weapons."

"Who is the cap'n, anyway?" asked Joe, suddenly.

"There, pard, you've got me; I'll never tell you," replied Jimmy, with a dubious shake of the head.

"Hain't that a wig he's got on; and a false beard, too?"

"Well, they don't look very natural; you don't often see a man with jet-black hair and blue eyes, you know."

"What do you suppose he wears 'em for?"

"To keep folks from knowing him, of course; it's a cute dodge. I've a sort of an idea that our cap'n amounts to something, else

he wouldn't be so anxious to keep himself disguised," Jimmy said, with a knowing air. "He's smart enough to be somebody, anyway."

"That's so, old man; you never said a truer word!" Jimmy exclaimed.

"Hark!" cried Joe, suddenly, rising to a sitting posture as he spoke.

"What is it?" asked Jimmy, also rising, and laying his hand upon the butt of a revolver.

"The sound of a horse's hoofs, coming up the canyon," replied the other.

"It must be the cap'n."

The sound of the hoofs ringing out clear upon the rocky way of the canyon, could be distinctly heard.

Nearer and nearer came the sounds, and at last, Overland Kit, leading his horse by the bridle, entered the cave.

"Come at last, cap'n!" Joe said, as Kit placed his horse by the side of the other two at the end of the cave.

"Yes," the leader of the road-agents replied, seating himself on the empty couch of pines.

"What's the news?" Joe asked.

"Bad; in a few days the whole country from here to Austen will be after us. Judge Jones has been stirring up the miners, and the express company has put the United States troops upon our trail. They're going to hunt us down, boys, as if we were wolves."

"What's to be done?" exclaimed Jimmy. "Vamoose!" replied Kit, laconically.

"Levant, eh?" Joe said.

"That's our game; there's no use blinking at the truth. They will make this section altogether too hot to hold us. Sooner or later they'll track us here, and then the game is up; Judge Lynch will take a hand and we shall be strung up to some tall pines by way of ornamenting the landscape."

"Well, we haven't done badly, considering that we haven't collected toll in these parts very long," said Jimmy, with a grin.

"We have enough, boys, to make us all comfortable. We can return to civilized life; try and be honest men again, although I don't know as it's possible for a man to prosper on ill-gotten gains," Kit said, quietly.

"Then our little partnership is ended," Jimmy remarked.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm sorry for it," Joe said, reflectively. "We've made some money, and with mighty little trouble."

"Yes, and our gold is not stained with blood; we have gone for the express company and the rich men alone, and they're able to stand the loss. Now, we'll divide what gold-stuff we have here, shake hands and say good-by. If we should ever meet again, it is perhaps better that we three should be as strangers to each other," Kit said.

"Well, I'm agreeable," Joe remarked.

"So am I!" exclaimed Jimmy; "for my part I'm going to get out of this part of the country as soon as possible. I shall put for the East. I've got money enough to make me comfortable for the rest of my days, and I think I've had all the rough work that I want."

"You are acting wisely; and now I have a request to make," Kit said.

"Spit it out!" Joe exclaimed.

"The secret of this cave I wish preserved.

"Yes, of course; but it is necessary that she should sign the receipt for it." There was a strange look on the Judge's face as he spoke. "I can take the book right up along with me," Bill replied.

"I can't spare it at present," the Judge said, quickly. "But, Bill, you can tell Miss Jinnie that the box is down here and she can come down for it, sign the receipt and then I'll send it up."

The driver looked at the Judge in astonishment.

"Say, what's up, Judge? Never knew you to act so cranky afore. Want to see the little gal, eh? got something for to say to her?"

"Well, yes; perhaps I have," the Judge said, slowly. "S'pose I'd better not come back with Jinnie?"

"It might be as well to let her come alone."

"All co-rect; a wink's as good as a nod to a blind horse," Bill said, sagaciously. "I'm off. Say, Judge, you ain't a-shinin' up to the gal that runs the Eldorado, are you, 'cos I'm goin' for her myself, and you don't stand a ghost of a show alongside of me."

"For I looked in the glass an' found it so. The handsomest nig in the country, oh."

Then Bill took his departure.

"I wonder what on airth the old cuss wants with Jinnie?" Bill muttered, as he walked up the street toward the hotel. "I cotched him the other day when he was eatin' his hash up to the saloon, a-lookin' at the gal with a peculiar look on that graveyard face of his. By hooky! Jinnie's struck a 'lead,' if she's got the Judge onto a string. 'Pay dirt,' by thunder! Guess the old cuss will 'pan out' well."

"Oh, pretty Jemima, don't say no, and we will married be."

I don't believe though that Jinnie will cotton to that old cuss, nobow you can fix it."

By the time that Bill had come to this conclusion, he had arrived at the saloon. Entering it, he found Jinnie, busy as a bee, as usual.

"Box for you down at the express office," Bill said, in his abrupt way.

"Why didn't you bring it up?" Jinnie asked.

"The old cuss, Judge Jones, objected; said you had better come down and see about it yourself."

His wants to see you 'bout something. Say, Jinnie, I reckon you've struck the old cuss for all he's worth;

"Den I was gone; clean gone!"

"Nonsense! Bill, you're always joking; but, does the Judge really want to see me?" she asked.

"That's his platform and no beefsteak! But, say, Jinnie, don't you throw yourself away on an old cuss like the Judge, when Ginger Bill is around;

"For you'd make me just as happy as a big sunflower!"

"I'll go and see what he wants."

So Jinnie caught up her straw hat, which lay behind the bar, and left the saloon.

With a light step, she hastened down the street toward the express office.

An earnest look was upon her face as she walked onward. The words of the jocose stage-driver had put strange thoughts into her head.

Many odd circumstances connected with Judge Jones' manner toward her came into her mind. She remembered how, once or twice, when the Judge was seated in the saloon eating his meals—the Judge took his meals at the Eldorado and slept in the express office—she had caught his eyes fixed upon her with a peculiar expression shining in them. She had not thought much of it at the time, but now, she began to ask herself if Bill had guessed the truth.

Entering the express office, she found the Judge alone, busy among his papers.

"Bill told me that a box has come for me," Jinnie said.

"Yes; there it is; charges, one dollar."

Jinnie handed over the amount and signed the receipt.

"I'll have it sent up to the hotel right away," the Judge said, a kind expression in his usually harsh voice. "Sit down, Miss Jinnie. I want to talk to you for a little while."

He brought a chair as he spoke and placed it by the girl's side.

Jinnie sat down and waited in silence. The Judge brought another chair for himself and sat down, facing Jinnie.

For a moment the Judge looked earnestly in the fresh young face of the girl, a strange expression upon his grave features, then he spoke.

"Miss Jinnie, do you know that the life that you are leading is a very strange one for a young girl?"

"Yes, I know it," Jinnie said, quietly.

"You are constantly brought in contact with the very worst class that frequents our town—rough, uncouth miners—you can not be happy leading such a life."

"I must get my living some way; I have no one to look out for me," Jinnie replied, earnestly. "I know that the miners are rough, but you forget Judge that I was brought up among them; by this time I ought to be pretty well used to them and to their ways."

"Jinnie, what ever put it into your head to take the Eldorado?" the Judge asked, suddenly.

"I don't know; I suppose because it was the only thing I could do here. I work hard, and I'm doing well, and there isn't any one in Spur City that can truthfully say a word against me." The girl held up her head proudly as she spoke.

"That's true."

"Yes; after father died, I didn't have five dollars in the world. I was all alone, helpless, almost friendless. I sat in the little cabin down by the Reese after the funeral, crying for father, for he had always been a good father to me; I felt as if there wasn't anybody on earth that cared anything for me. I had a good mind to go out and jump into the river and die there, where father had died. Then somebody came in to see me. He didn't say much, but what he did say dried my tears right up, and made me know that father had spoken truth when he said, after he passed in his chocks, there was somebody up in the sky that would look after me. I never learned to pray, Judge, but, just then, I did pray, not with my lips, but way down in my heart."

"This friend that came to see you offered you assistance, then?" the Judge questioned, a peculiar look in his stern eyes.

"Yes, he did; but he wasn't what you call a regular friend; I had never seen him but once before. He told me that the Reese had taken one father from me but had given me another, and he was the other."

"Why, I don't understand how that could be," said the Judge, puzzled at the words.

"It was true, but I would rather not speak any more about that, if you please," Jinnie replied, a little embarrassed.

"Just as you please; but go on with your story; I am very much interested."

"Then he told me that he intended to look out for me until I was able to take care of myself, and he asked me what I thought I would like to do. You've seen the lightning flash, Judge, haven't you, in a thunder storm?"

The Judge nodded assent.

"Well, just as quick as that, the thought came into my mind to take the Eldorado. When I told him of it, he looked grave, but, after thinking for a moment, he asked me if I thought I could run it. I told him I thought I could, and that settled the matter. I took the hotel, and you know the rest, Judge, as well as I do."

"Yes; I think I can guess who aided you?"

"I don't want you to, Judge!" cried Jinnie, earnestly.

CHAPTER XII.

JUDGE JONES' QUESTION.

JUDGE JONES cast a long and steady glance into the face of the girl. It was evident that he was not pleased with her speech.

"You do not wish me, then, to guess who your friend is?" he said.

Jinnie replied by a single movement of the head.

"Do you know that I take a great interest in you, my girl?" the Judge asked, a strange hesitation evident in his speech.

"I'm sure, I'm very much obliged, Judge," Jinnie said, hesitantly.

"It pains me to see you leading the life that you do; something tells me to extend a hand, and try to lift you from it. Are you willing to be aided by me?"

For a moment Jinnie's gaze sought the floor. In the eyes of the Judge she read the full meaning of his words.

"You do not answer," he said, after waiting for a moment.

"I'm very much obliged to you, Judge, but I am getting along very well now," she replied, slowly. "If I should need a friend, why I'll remember what you've just said."

The Judge started to his feet and paced up and down the room for a few moments, his brow contracted in thought. Suddenly he halted, facing the girl, and extended his hands to her.

"Give me your hands, Jinnie," he said, in a tone that betrayed traces of deep agitation.

Astonished at the request, the girl placed her little brown hands in the broad palms of the stalwart man.

Quickly, with a feverish haste, the fingers of the Judge closed around the little hands. He raised her from the chair to her feet and gazed, with an earnest look, into her face.

"Jinnie, do you love any one?" he questioned.

For a moment the face of the girl flushed crimson at the question. She strove to withdraw her hands from his, but he held her fast as by a grip of iron.

"You do not answer my question?" he cried, his lips trembling with a strange excitement.

"You have no right to ask it," Jinnie said, slowly, avoiding the earnest gaze of the Judge.

"Perhaps not—perhaps not!" he exclaimed, slowly; "still, I do ask it. Will you reply?"

"No."

The answer of the girl was low but firm; no trace of hesitation in her voice.

The brows of the Judge contracted at her words.

"Then, if there is a man in Spur City who loves you—a man rich, holding a good position in the world, esteemed by his fellows—if there is such a man, and he should come to you and say: 'I love you; will you let me take you from the unwomanly life that you are leading and place you before the world, the wife of a wealthy man? what would be your answer?'"

"No!"

Firmly and promptly the answer came.

"You will not change your mind?"

"No."

For a single moment the Judge gazed into the earnest face of the girl; then he released her hands and turned away; walking to the other side of the room, he sat down in a chair, and placing his elbow upon the table near him, half hid his face in his hand.

Jinnie stood irresolute, not knowing whether to go or stay. The strange manner of the Judge surprised her.

"Do you wish to say anything more?" she asked, timidly.

"No; I will have the box sent up," he replied, in a strange, unnatural tone.

With a puzzled look upon her face, Jinnie left the express office.

The Judge remained for a few moments motionless, a dark look upon his massive face. Then he rose to his feet and began pacing, with a rapid step, up and down the narrow limits of the room.

"She loves him!" he muttered, in an angry tone. "I read the truth in the crimson flush that spread over her face at my question. Shall he have her?" There was an angry menace in his voice as he asked the question.

"Yes, when the Reese river runs backward, and the peaks of the Sierra melt like the snow that lies upon them in the winter-time," the Judge compressed his lips firmly, and clenched his hands nervously, as though he held a foe in his grasp.

"His life or mine, eh? A dreadful meaning in the simple question. It must come to that, sooner or later. All the Reese river valley isn't big enough to hold both of us. I'll have him out of the way before another week goes by. It's strange what a fascination there is in this girl's face."

Then the Judge sat down to the table and commenced to write. The words he traced upon the paper threatened a human life.

Jinnie, returning to the Eldorado, met the lawyer, Mr. Renmet.

"Ah, by-the-by, Miss—"

"Jinnie," said the girl, as the lawyer hesitated.

"Yes, Miss Jinnie; can you tell me where I can find the gentleman who gave me my room up to Miss Gwynne last night?" Renmet asked.

"Why, does she want to see him?" Jinnie asked, quickly.

"Well, I—that is—of course it would be only common politeness for her to express to him her appreciation of his kindness," replied the old gentleman, rather embarrassed at Jinnie's direct question. Bernice, that morning, had astonished the lawyer by the eagerness with which she had requested an interview with Talbot. In obedience to her commands, the old gentleman had been searching for "Injun Dick" all the evening, but without success.

"She wants to see him?" repeated Jinnie, thoughtfully.

"Ye—yes," replied Renmet, who couldn't understand why the young girl was so particular in regard to the matter.

"I don't know where he is," Jinnie said; "I haven't seen him since last night."

"Can you inform me of any place where I would be likely to find him?"

"Perhaps he's up in the Gully."

"The Gully?"

"Yes, Gopher Gully; it's about two miles up the valley. Follow the river till you come to where a little creek runs into it; then turn to your right; the camp is only about a hundred yards or so from the river."

"You think that I will be likely to find him there?"

"I don't know anything about it," replied Jinnie, with a shake of the head. "But he's just as likely to be there as anywhere else."

"And just as likely not to be there, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Ah!" Renmet came to the speedy conclusion that he hadn't obtained much information.

Jinnie went on her way toward the saloon, leaving the old lawyer in a rather puzzled state of mind.

"Bless me! I wonder why she was so anxious to know if Bernice wanted to see this young man?" muttered the lawyer. "I suppose that I may as well go back to the hotel, and tell Bernice that I can't find the young man. I don't think it will be of any use for me to travel two miles up this valley, over the rocks and through the mud. It's ten chances to one that I shall only have my labor for my pains."

So, having come to this determination, Renmet returned to the hotel. He went at once to Bernice's room. He found the young girl gazing out of the window.

Bernice turned eagerly as the old lawyer entered the room.

"Well?" she questioned, in haste, almost before he had entered the apartment.

"I haven't been able to find him," Renmet said, understanding what she wished to know.

"Oh, that's too bad!" exclaimed Bernice, petulantly.

"My dear child, I have inquired all over this delightful city, and no one seems able to tell where he is to be found. I asked the landlady—that young girl, you know—and she said that he might be in a place called Gopher Gully, two miles up the valley, but the chances were that he might not be there."

"Did you tell her that I wanted to see him?" Bernice asked.

"No; I didn't tell her so—that is, not until she asked me. She guessed it some way."

"Then she would not tell if she knew?" exclaimed Bernice, impetuously.

"Eh?" cried the lawyer, in astonishment; "why not?"

"I can't—well, only a fancy of mine," Bernice replied, in some little confusion. "Where is this Gopher Gully?"

"Follow the river up two miles to a creek; then turn to the right."

"I am tired of staying in the house; I'll go for a walk," the girl said, suddenly, rising and taking her hat and cloak.

"Shall I accompany you, my dear?"

"I won't trouble you; I'm only going a little way," Bernice replied.

Leaving the lawyer utterly astounded at her sudden determination, Bernice left the hotel.

She followed the little road that led along by the river. Soon she left Spur City behind. The road wound along, flanked by river, rocks and pines. A man going toward the city came in sight. At the first glance, Bernice recognized him. The man approaching was Dick Talbot!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

Old Bull's-Eye, THE LIGHTNING SHOT OF THE PLAINS.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OLD BULL'S-EYE'S REWARD.

THIS announcement fell upon the ears of Juan de Sylva's hearers, with the force of a thunderclap. They stood as though petrified, interchanging glances of wondering doubt.

"You doubt me," added de Sylva—or rather Antone Barillo, as he must hereafter be termed—faintly; "you think I am deceiving you. The time for that is past. I am dying—I feel a dull, heavy dropping inside—I will be a corpse before another sun. 'Tis that would—there is a bullet in my lungs, but I could not give way while she was in the hands of those devils. But now she is free—and I repeat it, Abel Vermilye, Anita, the darling whom I have taught to call me father, is your child—the babe that your wife, Dolores, carried with her when she eloped with me."

"She your child—then—what am I?" faltered Carmela, as she drew a little away from the scout's side.

"Pray that his words may be true, little one—for then you can be my wife," were Old Bull's-Eye's words, as he drew the maiden to his side again, his strong arm holding her firmly and tenderly.

"Father," said Luis, who was supporting the wounded man's head, "you must not try to speak now—you are killing yourself—wait until a more favorable moment."

"No, my boy—for you, at least, are my son—no; I must speak out while I can. I can feel the blood creeping up—soon 'twill suffocate me. Nay, don't weep—be a man. I am not afraid to die—what is it but a long, dreamless sleep, after all? Nothing—nothing more!"

His speech was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing, which was ended by ejecting a quantity of blood. He smiled faintly at the spasm subsided. He knew as well as they that his hours were numbered, and motioned aside the proffered water.

"Give me brandy—whisky—anything that will sustain me while I can clear my conscience," he gasped, and fairly drained a leather flask of fiery liquor.

His confession, if such it may be termed, was a long one, interrupted by frequent spasms, during each of which it seemed as though death must come to his relief, but by plentiful use of liquor, he would as often rally and continue his statement. Naturally there was much repetition and irrelevant matter, and the reader would be worried were his words literally recorded. The substance would suffice for a proper understanding of what may yet be clouded.

Antone Barillo and Dolores Ventura had been engaged to each other nearly a year before Abel Vermilye made his appearance, but Vincente Ventura saw that his only hope of averting utter ruin, lay in wedding his daughter to Abel, and so forbade Barillo the house, forcing his daughter to smile upon the rich young planter. He was a stern man, and Dolores had always been accustomed to bow to his will. She did so in this case, and told Barillo that they must part forever. He finally accepted this fiat, and left the country. Dolores married Vermilye, though hating him with all her fiery, intense nature, until little Anita—or Esther, as Abel called her then—came to make peace between husband and wife. 'Twas at this time that Barillo, unable longer to fight

his passion, returned, and found an opportunity to meet Dolores in secret. That interview sealed the future of all; and from that day on, Dolores' hatred for her husband increased, until at last she fled with Barillo.

What followed can easily be imagined. Dolores was of an intensely jealous disposition, and far from being the angel that Barillo had pictured her when denied him. And day by day his love for her cooled, until, after an unusually stormy scene, he abandoned her, taking with him the child, who had wound herself firmly round his heart.

From that day on, until the burning of his rancho, Barillo did not meet nor hear anything of Dolores. He went to Spain, and there married a high-born lady—a widow, with one son: Luis. Then he returned, and started a cattle rancho. His wife died. He raised Anita and Luis in the belief that he was their father—that they were twins.

"That is all—and I call upon the Blessed Virgin to witness the truth of what I have said. She is your daughter—my darling Anita, and may—"

The man's speech was abruptly checked by another violent spasm of coughing, and rolling over, a stream of blood flowed from his mouth—and with it went out his life.

An hour later the senseless clay was placed into a shallow grave, and with uncovered head, Old Bull's-Eye said:

"May the good God rest his soul, and forgive him as freely and completely as I do, Amen!"

The loose earth was pushed back, the body hidden from mortal eyes. And, kneeling side by side, Anita and Luis prayed silently for the eternal repose of the soul of him whom they had so long regarded as their father. And their tears bedewed his humble grave.

"But Chiquita—your wife, I mean—declared that I was your child," said Carmela, hesitatingly.

It was late at night, but none of those in whom we have been more immediately interested, could compose themselves to sleep after the exciting events, and Old Bull's-Eye had drawn Carmela aside from the rest.

"She did, I know, at first, and I thought that was what she meant just before she died, when she said—'there is your child.' But you and Anita were together—I believe now that it was Anita she meant, not you. Then there is her treatment of you—you told me that she did not believe she was your mother. Barillo seemed sincere in his confession, and he swore that Anita was my child. I believe he spoke the truth. My heart told me from the first that you could not be my child—my love for you is far different."

"Then I—I only find a father, to lose him," half lamented Carmela. "I am nobody, then, is seems!"

"I believe, before God, that you are my daughter!" said a deep, emotional tone, as Walter Dugrand came forward. "I have no proof save what I find in my heart, but, Carmela, if you will, there is a home, and a father's love awaiting you—will you accept it?"

"You hear what he says, little one! I believe he is your father. If you can think so, perhaps his is the best right—"

"Do you want me to go with him?" exclaimed the girl, breathing quickly.

"No—I don't—I can't say that! You promised to be mine—you whispered that you loved me, when we expected death together at every moment—my right is better than his. Little one, will you repeat those words now?"

"Yes—and more! I am yours—yours only and forever!" murmured Carmela, and her arms wound around his neck, her little form quivered in a close embrace as his eager lips met hers in a long, lingering kiss of passionate love.

And this was Old Bull's-Eye's reward.

A few more words, and my story is done.

The party passed the desert in safety, and finally reached Santa Fe. There occurred a double wedding, solemnized by Father Ignacio, the very priest who had inadvertently put Old Bull's-Eye upon the right trail. And, learning what had occurred, he settled all doubts by declaring that Anita was indeed the child of Dolores Vermilye. He had long been a friend of Antone Barillo, and had, in fact, advised him to take the child with him in his flight, for Dolores was not a proper guardian. Thus, all doubts set at rest, Old Bull's-Eye wedded Carmela, while Anita made Perry Abbott happy. Then, in company with Walter Dugrand, they returned to the States, and reclaiming his plantation, Old Bull's-Eye, the Lightning Shot of the Plains, became once more Abel Vermilye, the quiet planter.

Walter Dugrand still persisted in regarding Carmela as his daughter, and settled down beside them, willing all his property to her when he died.

Luis Barillo rebuilt his rancho, and for many years carried on the business of cattle raising, and his children have succeeded him.

As for the rest of those who have figured in this story, they have scattered far and wide, no one knows where.

But throughout the far South-west, there may still be heard occasional mention of "OLD BULL'S-EYE, THE LIGHTNING SHOT OF THE PLAINS."

THE END.

Readers of this splendid romance which is now just ended will be gratified to know that it will be followed by another serial story from the same hand. It is, indeed, a most exciting and suggestive story of the wild West—full of that humor, originality and power of depicting wild life which has rendered this author's writings so popular. The new serial is

YELLOWSTONE JACK, THE TRAPPER;

OR,
The Specter of the Boiling Springs.

FASHIONABLE WEDDINGS.—The English fashion in conducting weddings is gaining favor. Groomsmen are done away with, and ushers take their places. As these last are essential to the number of eight, the supply of available young men would be exhausted if eight more were necessary as groomsmen. Besides, the effect around the chancel is finer, if the girls' pretty dresses are not marred by the intermingling of black coats. Gentlemen ought to rejoice that they do not have to go through the trying ordeal of kneeling around a chancel in full view of hundreds of eager, curious eyes behind them; girls who attend a wedding just for the sake of the scenic effect. The floating drapery of the bridesmaids appears to even greater advantage when the fair wearers kneel in graceful postures, but the men look ridiculous with their coat-tails touching the steps, and the soles of their boots turned upward. At a glance the observers can easily tell if those boots are old or new, and the number worn. So groomsmen are things of the past, and the best man has only to stand by the groom until he receives the bride. The ushers, after seating the guests, walk up the aisles of which they have charge, after the bridal party enter, and take their seats.



NEVER AGAIN.

BY M. W. BALDWIN.

Never again will the roses bloom
Just as they did in the bygone June;
Never again will the wild flowers blow
For you and for me as they did long ago,
Nor the stars look down, nor the moon's pale light
Shed a radiance fair as it did that night.

Never again will the breezes play
With your golden curls as they did that day,
When your blue eyes shined with a shy delight,
You danced with me in the golden light,
When music, and mirth, and laughter gay,
Made the joyous hours fly swift away.

Oh, I would that the tender light
Of those sweet eyes charmed my soul to-night,
Charmed away the care and pain,
And brought me rest and peace again!
Oh, I would that the roses sweet
Bloomed again at my careless feet.

FINGER NAILS.

If finger-tips have a language of their own, so have the nails; and the manner of keeping is as eloquent as all the rest. Some keep them long and pointed, like reminiscences of claws; others bite theirs close to the quick; some pare and trim and scrape and polish up to the highest point of artificial beauty; and others, carrying the doctrine of nature to the outside limit, let them grow wild, with jagged edges, broken tracts, and agnails or "back friends" as the agonizing consequences. Sometimes you see the most beautiful nails, pink, transparent, filbert-shaped, with the delicate filmy little "half-moon" indicated at the base—all the conditions of beauty carried to perfection, but all rendered of no avail by dirt and slovenliness; while others, thick, white, ribbed, square, with no half-moon, spotted like so many circus-horses with "gifts" and "friends," and the like—that is, without beauties and with positive blemishes—are yet pleasant to look at for the care bestowed on them, their dainty perfection of cleanliness being a charm in itself. Nothing indeed is more disgusting than dirty hands and neglected nails, and nothing gives one such a sense of freshness and ease as the same members well kept. But one of the ugliest things in nails is when they are bitten; which, to judge by what one sees, is a habit having irresistible fascinations for those given over to it. It is an action, by the way, that has more than one significance. It may mean consideration, doubt, hesitancy; or it may mean anger and annoyance; or, as a habit, it may point to the not remote possibility of madness. In any way it is ugly to look at, and worse than ugly in its results; bare finger-tips, with the protecting cover gnawed to the bleeding flesh, belonging to the list of things mutilated and willfully spoiled—therefore taken out of the category of things ugly by nature, hence misfortunes for which the sufferer is in no wise accountable.

The Letter-Box.

SADIE (Bound Brook, N. J.) writes: "I am my mother's assistant in house

"WORSTED."

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

A tangle of worsted of manifold hue—
An ivory needle—a dimple or two.
White, swift-flying fingers, a pair of soft eyes,
Where shyly, half-hidden, a wealth of love lies—
Make up the sweet picture before me to-day
That is framed in a window—"just over the way."

If the work of her fingers—the loop and the thread—
And the fancies inwoven with them, could be read
As plainly as can be the arch glances sweet,
She gives me at times from her side of the street,
I should hush my heart pulses lest they might be
tray
The thought, that one loves me—"just over the way."

In the meshes inwoven with consummate art,
Unconscious—she's netted small bits of my heart.
And could she but weave with her worsteds so fine
Some picture to show this devotion of mine,
She would blushing see in the finished crochet
My love for the maiden—"just over the way."

Ah, well! It is over, that dream of my heart,
And my love like the dream must so quickly depart.
For the mind of the maid, and the fruits of her
knitting,
Resulted in giving—yours truly—the mitten,
My heart hath no choice, but to sadly obey
The behest of the maiden—"just over the way."

The Terrible Truth:
OR,
THE THORNEBURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE
WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CO-
RAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

"FROM THIS HOUR I HAVE NO SON!"
MR. OWEN DARE leaned back in his chair,
his toes upon the fender, his eyes very thought-
ful and compassionate in expression fixed upon
his companion. It was near the close of a
lowering, gray, early December day, the same
which had witnessed the blast of the preced-
ing chapter. A sea coal fire burned cheerily
in the grate, casting a red glow over the two
silent, motionless forms. It was a comfortable
situation, and one Dare was prepared to thor-
oughly enjoy for all the tender concern so aptly
pictured in his countenance.

Opposite, stretched at length upon a lounge,
his head upon his arm and moody face turned
fixedly toward the fire, lay Vane Vivian.
Dare had found him there, half an hour before,
had addressed a few remarks to him, eliciting
monosyllabic replies, and then relapsed into
the silence which suited best the other's mood.
He was the first to stir at last, after waiting
vainly for some recognition of the sympathy
he had endeavored dutifully to express.

"Something has been going amiss, Vane.
What is it?" I haven't seen you look so down-
cast for a month, and, 'pon honor, that dolor-
ous visage is a more suggestive than agree-
able sight. What's gone wrong, my dear fel-
low?"

Vane moved and flung himself upon his el-
bow sullenly.

"Don't pretend to be a guy, Dare! You
know well as I do that people have been saying
for the last three years I have gone wrong, and
there isn't a doubt about people being in the
right of it. The devil of it is, they're ready
enough to drive a fellow all wrong, but never
willing to help right him again. It's the prop-
er sort of retribution of course, and I for one
shall never grumble, take it as a dispensation
and all that. Fit subject for the morality of
the lesson, am I not?"

"Not in that bitter mood I am afraid," he
spoke seriously, putting aside the other's sneer-
ing inflection by his gravity.

"Don't you begin to lecture a reform," said
Vane, testily. "You asked what was amiss, I
believe. Only that I've got into a fix so tight
that I can't by any possibility get out again.
The colonel has given me my walking papers,
or as good, and I may as well be set adrift first
as last."

"My dear Vane, don't let yourself grow de-
pendent. The colonel is never as implacable
as he appears. He will be the first to make up
this quarrel, if it has been a quarrel, mark my
words!"

"I know his peculiarities far better than you
can, and I tell you he will never see me through
this scrape as he has done with others. I have
nothing to say against him, mind; the sooner
he is well rid of such an unworthy representa-
tive the better, and I wouldn't ask him for
help now if a word would bring it."

Dare looked at him keenly.

"You don't censure him, but very evidently
there is some one you do censure. You are
not dealing frankly with me; you have kept
something back. My own ability to give you
aid is very limited; but, my dear fellow, there
is no one who will devote himself more faith-
fully to your cause. Is that haughty pride go-
ing to hold me off at arm's length, Vane?"
There was mournful reproach and a sense of
willful injury in Mr. Dare's tone.

"I think you can scarcely help knowing
what has been kept back, Dare. You've been
so thick with the colonel and at the house that
you were probably taken into confidence. It
was hardly friendly not to have given me a
warning."

"Now, by George! you are absolutely un-
kind. I haven't the least intimation of what
you intend to convey."

"Didn't you know anything of this plot the
colonel has been concocting, his pet scheme of
marrying me to his ward, who has ousted me
from his affections it appears? You were in
love with her once, I remember, as much in
love as you are ever apt to get, so I don't ex-
pect any sympathy in telling you I have re-
fused her and with her Thorneburst and all its
belongings."

"I suspected something of this sort, Vane;
I could not help seeing how Miss Carteret
has managed to work herself into your father's
good graces. My surprise is that she has suc-
ceeded so well and so quickly in her cunning
game."

Vane's eyes left the fire to rest for a moment
upon Dare, in cold questioning.

"You appear to have misunderstood me. I
mentioned it as the colonel's scheme. I ab-
solute Miss Carteret from any active share in
it. It is simply a plan to reform and domesti-
cate me to the approved state of the animal
man, but I have an objection to being disposed
of in that way, unfortunately. I don't deny
being out up a wife in regard to the result. I
am not quite reconciled to being swept out of
my place so unceremoniously, but in the ab-
stract it is precisely what I deserve as I have
taken occasion to remark."

"A moment ago you 'found no fault' with
the colonel; now you 'absolve Miss Carteret,'
and it is very clearly evident that cause for
censure lies between them. I can look at the
affair with more impartial, more just eyes than
you, my dear boy. I tell you I suspected it
before. A man in that young lady's position
would be called a fortune-hunter; almost any
other woman an adventuress; but it is best

for you to see the matter leniently as you
can."

"Upon my word, I supposed you would be
ready to jump at the nearest chance of getting
her, and here you are traducing her until I'm
obliged to speak in her favor."

"I have admired Miss Carteret, Vane. She
is no worse in her sphere than I have been in
mine. We are both poverty's favorites, and
she is not so much to be blamed for aspiring
to Thorneburst. You'll never know, until you
have been there, the misery of knowing your-
self habitually hard-up."

"I'm apt to find it out soon enough. And
there is a difference between this case and
yours, supposing of course you allude to your
interest in the Ferguson-Hayes affair. The
gushing Augusta flung herself and her eighty
thousand fairly enough at your head. I am
not so liberal as to care nothing for the threat-
ened loss of my inheritance, but I am more
hurt at finding myself supplanted in my father's
heart. I have been lying here all afternoon
looking my own situation in the face, and I
tell you it is hopeless. You had better cut
adrift from me with the rest in time to save
yourself."

He was relapsing back to his first morbid in-
difference. The hard thoughts which were
keeping him company had brought visible lines
into the darkly moody face. A desperate man,
without hope, that was what Dare saw in him
and his treacherous heart thrilled exultingly.

"I have been talking of this freely to you,
Owen," said Vane, in something of his old
frank, affectionate manner, "more freely than
I am apt to ever speak of it again. I haven't
mapped out any course for myself yet; but I
am strengthening myself in a good resolution
never to touch the dice again. I'd vow it by
all that's sacred at this minute if I were out of
the clutches of the Shylocks. I'm nearly de-
termined as it is to make a turning point if I
only know how to get the brakes down to the
 requisite notch."

"You'll come out right yet, my dear fel-
low. Don't despond just now; the colonel is
sure to relent, however hard he may seem, and
his ward is tolerably sure to over-reach herself
if she counts on his rash threat of to-day. Take
my word for it, Colonel Vivian will re-
pent his harshness and be ready to retract in
less than three days. Rouse up and dress for
the evening, Vane. Stir yourself out of this
dolorous mood. Suppose we go around to
Nibo's for another sight of the Black Crook;
new features in the spectacle, I believe. What's
this—Madeira? oh, brandy. As a general
thing I wouldn't advise it, but you'll be the
better for some stimulus just now."

He had turned to a little stand where a
smoke-colored bottle stood, untouched, with
glasses beside it. Vane watched him fill one
to the brim, and tossed it off when it was of-
fered him with the recklessness which had car-
ried him into excesses often before this. Sha-
dows were creeping thick into the room. Dare
applied a match to the gas, and came back to
his seat before the fire.

"Shall I be Nibo's?" he asked. "Or have
you something better to propose?"

"That as well as anything. I was about to
decline going out, but I have reconsidered. If
Sir Rupert were in town now, I'd not be at
any loss how to spend the evening."

"Thanks to my patron saint that Sir Rup-
ert is a hundred miles away," thought Dare.
The young idiot would have confided in him
rather than me, but for that."

Some hours later they strolled out from
Nibo's, arm-in-arm. The evening was not
half over, but they had seen the "spectacle"
perhaps a dozen times before this. Vane
was too restless to remain quiet long.

"I think I shall go to my room and to bed,"
he said, as they stepped upon the pavement.
"I've managed to work myself into a small
fever this afternoon. No, don't call a car-
riage unless you object to walking yourself."

Dare did not object. They both lit cigars,
and the keen wintry air of the streets changed
Vane's inclination.

"It's too early to go home yet," he decided.
"Suppose we go in here for a moment?"

Dare glanced up at the front of the tall
building, which was not lighted, and drew
back.

"I hadn't the slightest intention of coming
this way," he said, hurriedly. "You had
better not, Vane. I've been revolving the
question of your difficulties while we were
walking here. If you can bring yourself to
let it, my boy, why not accept the colonel's
terms? It is not too late yet, and in that case
it will certainly be better to cut such places as
this from the very first. Think, Vane."

"Preserve me from ever thinking, if it
leads me to that," he broke out, irritably.
"You're a prince of good fellows, Dare. You
have never once said, 'I told you so,' since
I've got to the bottom of the pit, and no one
else ever warned more faithfully than you. I
tell you I wouldn't save Thorneburst to myself
in that way if a thousand times more depend-
ed upon it. I'm going in to try my luck once
more, and no matter what the result may be,
I swear off against the vice forever after. I
can't be any worse cornered, and there's a
chance of winning enough to stave along till I
get some plan ahead."

Nothing in life worth living for better than
his cigars, his wines, his pleasures of the day,
Vane Vivian had thought, and here he was
hanging his hopes on such a feverish chance as
has snapped many a life before now. Youthful
vitality is never quite hopeless, never quite
willing to give up the struggle, however mis-
directed its effort may be.

Dare followed him in through dim passages,
where their footfalls were lost in the thick pile
of rich carpets, up some broad, shallow
steps, and into a saloon where the burst of
sudden light was dazzling in its brilliancy, a
lofty, frescoed, paneled room, with a few per-
sons loitering there. There were marble ta-
bles scattered about, and a sideboard loaded
with glittering silver, where wines ruby and
amber sparkled in crystal flacons. Vane ap-
proached and helped himself liberally; after-
ward the two young men passed through into
an adjoining room, and here for the first the
true character of the place became apparent.

A silence, broken by the sharp rattle of
dice, the monotonous repetition of numbers
from the near vicinity of a baize door, behind
which a faro-bank was located, reigned here.
Dare remained in the background while Vane
approached one of the tables and flung himself
into a vacant place. A player opposite glanced
up and nodded.

"Going to take your revenge to-night, Mr.
Vivian?"

"Either that, or your friend Moses may
mark me off his books as a dead letter."

The other laughed one of those cold-blooded,
chilling laughs which should belong to a vam-
pire rather than a man.

"My friend Moses seldom does business in
that way," he answered, carelessly. "Young
gentlemen of your ilk don't run the risk of
imprisonment for obtaining money on false
pretences. My friend Moses is not apt to lose
through you, Mr. Vivian."

"He's safe until midnight," thought Dare,
from his place near the entrance. "You are
in a tight fix, you confiding simpleton, but if
you don't find yourself in a tighter one within
the next two hours, there will be one more
disappointed man than yourself."

Colonel Vivian had just come in from the
street, and was divesting himself of his great-
coat in the hall, when the bell jingled again,
and he turned sharply to himself open the
door through which the servant had admitted
him a moment before.

"You, Dare," he said, with a breath of re-
lief. "I've just come from your quarters,
from Vane's rather. Where is the rascal now?
They told me there you had both gone out for
the evening. Great heavens, man, what is the
matter?"

He had caught sight of Dare's face in the
glare of the hall light, and a great thrill of
dread shot to his heart lest something terrible
had befallen Vane. Nora had had her own
way before their interview of the morning
was concluded. She had extorted an un-
willing promise from him that he would make
friends again with Vane. Misgivings as to
the perfect wisdom of his own course had
crept into his mind during the day. He
meant what he had said in the main. He'd
hanged if he'd retract from a single condition.
Vane should marry Nora, provided Nora would
take him, of which he was by no means so sure,
or he should never set foot upon Thorneburst as
presumptive heir. But it had been the worst
of policy, he must admit that, to come to an
open outbreak with his son. Nora was right
so far; he would make up with Vane, recall
him to the house again, and trust affairs to
come right in the end. Get the boy's anger
set—pure Vivian temper he had, and worse
than Vivian obstinacy—and Lucifer himself
couldn't be expected to foresee what lengths
he might take.

Owen Dare had very obedient facial muscles
at his command, and his countenance at first
sight was pallid and startled to a degree which
might have been the colonel's ready fear.

"Nothing to alarm you, Colonel Vivian,"
he answered, composing himself as if with an
effort. "You have just come in. Put on your
coat again and come with me, sir. Nothing—
no harm that is—has happened Vane, but I
think you had better come to him. I will
explain on the street, and let me suggest it
will be needless to arouse the ladies' anxiety."

The colonel had made a motion to approach
the drawing-room door, but turned back, re-
suming great-coat and hat.

"Now then," he said, huskily, and went out
attended by Dare. Notwithstanding the lat-
ter's assurance that no harm had befallen Vane,
he felt it was a sophistry to calm his fears, and
his rush of remorseful emotion in that moment
was a keen agony, before which the old sol-
dier shrunk, he who had never quailed before
bullet or sword.

"Tell me what it is—the worst," he deman-
ded, as they descended the steps, with almost
a groan. "What has my unhappy boy been do-
ing, Owen?"

Before the colonel's shuddering inner sight
was a picture of his son, limp, lifeless, with
a pistol by his side and a bullet through his skull
—a suicide. Oh, why had he not thought
sooner of the probability of such a result? He
felt like a murderer himself, but he was
straight as any oak, showing no trace of emo-
tion, except in his pale, set features.

"You are unnecessarily alarmed, Colonel
Vivian. You are fancying Vane has done
himself some harm, but he has not—yet. I
fear he is in just the state to do so, and that is
why I failed to consider his wishes and came
for you. I found him in a desperate, moody
frame of mind this afternoon. He has been
drinking heavily since, and I left him in a
gambling hell, where he insisted on going. I
believe with the idea of retrieving his late
losses, or ending all on the spot." He called a
passing hack as he ceased speaking. The two
got in, the vehicle rolled on its way down-
town, and scarcely another word was exchang-
ed between them until they reached the tall,
dark building, whose portal had opened many
a time too often to Vane.

"Will you pardon me if I advise you not to
judge him too harshly?" said Dare, then. "I
don't know how true it is, but I heard some
one in there say he had been raising money on
a post-obit in your name. For Heaven's sake,
don't let any whisper of a disturbance get
about if the worst I fear be averted; those fel-
lows who have him in their clutches are mor-
e than death. Come; we can't be near him
too soon; and if he appears much excited, be
cautious about presenting yourself suddenly,
sir."

An oath, more frightful than even the col-
onel's oaths generally were, was crushed be-
tween his set teeth in a fierce mutter, an ut-
terance which Dare discreetly failed to ob-
serve.

Vane had been raising money on a post-
obit! He had been counting on his death as
the price to relieve him from the results of his
own wicked folly! So help him, angels of hea-
ven, and demons of the bottomless depths of the
bottomless pit, he would never relent now, had
he even been inclined before. From this hour
he would recognize no son.

The thick, grizzled mustache quivered for
one instant, a sharp agony of bitterest dis-
appointment pierced his soul. Could it be his
own son, the brave, bright, willful boy he had
idolized despite his grave faults, bartering the
chances of his life, considering the father who
had loved him with unwise tenderness as no-
thing by the side of his own pleasures and
vices? It was a trace of weakness passing
swiftly, which left the colonel hard as iron, his
features locked in an icy calm more terrible in
him than the utmost passion of rage.

Unconscious of the impending thunderbolt,
Vane Vivian was playing recklessly, losing
heavily and steadily.

"Bad luck, to-night, Mr. Vivian," said the
vampire opposite. "Do you double again?"

"Double!"

The cards were dealt, there was a breathless
moment, and then Vane flung himself back,
with a bitter curse.

"You have cursed, again," said the vampire,
with a scarcely concealed sneer. "I'll take
your note for twenty thousand, Mr. Vivian."

"You've taken all I'll ever get from me,"
cried Vane, hotly. "I swear I'll never touch
a card again while I live."

"What has he lost?" asked the soldierly old
gentleman, who had just entered, in a con-
strained voice of one of the crowd of by-stand-
ers who had been watching the game.

"Mon Dieu! twenty thousand at von seat-
ing," said the other, with French shrug and ac-
cent. "Two times more and ten, feisty
tousand on ze books of what you call 'our
friend Moses.' Ciel! ze young Americaine von
extravagant gamester."

"It is hardly in honor to refuse giving your
note, Mr. Vivian," and out in the sharp tone of
the vampire.

"Take it and welcome if you care for that
much worthless paper," retorted Vane. "I
tell you you've plucked me of my last dollar."

Neither you nor your friend Moses are likely
ever to see the color of your money."

The sarcastic laugh of the latter was cut
short by a voice, deep, stern, changed almost
from recognition to the familiar ears it fell up-
on.

"This young man has spoken the truth if he
ever did in his life. If you have claims on
him, take them out of him the best way you
can. I swear not one penny shall be extorted
from me to save him from perdition! From
this hour, I have no son! Not one tithe of all
I own shall ever go to him; he is no more to
me than the merest beggar in the streets."

Vane wheeled, and for one instant saw the
colonel's face, unchanging in its rigid pallor,
in the strange, quiet sternness come upon it.
For one instant; then the colonel turned and
walked away without even vouchsafing him a
glance.

A dizzy blindness rushed over him; a sea of
red fire swam before his eyes; he raised his
arm with uncertain motion. Dare, who had
pressed to his side, knocked up his hand, and a
bullet shivered a ground-glass shade over their
heads.

"Not that yet, my friend," said Dare, cool-
ly, possessing himself of the pistol which fell
from Vane's unnerved fingers.

CHAPTER XIV.

AT THE RECEPTION.

It was past eleven when Colonel Vivian re-
turned to the house. The brave old soldier's
step never faltered, his tall form was erect as
ever, but the sharpest thrust of all his life had
been struck home to him. He went on to his
room, and it was only by the merest chance
that Nora had a glimpse of his face, set, rigid,
deathly pale, as it had been under the glare of
the gaslights in the gambling hall.

The family had not retired, but she had
withdrawn from the parlors and gone above
stairs when the colonel's familiar tread sound-
ed in the hall, and she waited in her open door.
That sight of his face gave her a thrill of
dread and awe, and he passed without seeing
the slight form leaning against the lintel, so
near that she might have touched him.

"Something has happened," thought Nora,
withdrawing slowly into her room. "Some-
thing has happened, and it is regarding Vane!
I never saw such a look upon the colonel's face
before. What has that poor fellow been driven
to do? I was sure my guardian was ready to
forgive him when he went out to-night."

That was a long night of suspense to Nora.
Straining her ears, she could hear the colonel's
heavy, monotonous tramp up and down his
own chamber, and somehow it seemed that her
own heart was being crushed under it. What
did it forebode to Vane? Something terrible,
she was very sure. It was no ordinary wrath,
fierce and passing, she had read in her guard-
ian's face; it was an implacable determination,
a crushing out suddenly of all the hope and
buoyancy which had been reflected there. Once
when it seemed she could stand it no longer,
she had thrust her little bare feet into slippers,
thrown a wrap about her shoulders, and gone
shivering through the passage to listen at his
door. That changeless tramp, tramp, went up
and down, but except that and her own heart-
beats, the silence of death reigned throughout
the house. She did not dare interrupt him
then, and crept back to her room with her own
fear intensified. She lay down upon her bed
and slept fitfully, the same unformed dread
haunting her dreams.

The gray of daylight struggled through the
curtains when she awoke. She was unrefreshed,
and the chill light of early morning, as she
drew back the draperies and glanced out upon
the mist and fog, only seemed to make more
vivid the specters of the night. The heavy
tread had ceased in the colonel's chamber. She
hoped he might be asleep at last, and drawing
on a dressing-robe, went through the passage
to listen at his door again, but all was quiet
within. An oriel window was just beyond,
and she lingered in it, gazing up at the sky
where faint rose streaks presaged the sunrise,
trying vainly to shake off the great dread of
evil which had fastened upon her.

The door at her back opened suddenly, and
she turned to see Colonel Vivian standing there.
He had not undressed during the night. His
eyes were dull and heavy, his face altered and
worn, until he looked ten years older than when
she had seen him last.

"Is that you, Nora?" he asked. "What are
you doing there at this hour? Go back to your
bed, child, before you take your death of
cold."

She sprang to his side, laying both her hands
upon his arm, and his gaze shifted from the
wistful young face turned up to him as if in
pain.

"What is the matter, guardian? Something
has happened—what is it? I have hardly slept
throughout knowing how disturbed you were."

"Go back to your room and don't worry,
Nora. I have been restless; I am scarcely
well; I'll come all right during the day."

"You are looking like a ghost of yourself,
guardian. And you can't deceive me. Some-
thing has happened to your son. What is it,
guardian?"

He shook her off almost roughly, and looked
at her with strangely anguished eyes.

"Never say that word to me again. I have
no son. For all time henceforth I have no son.
Never breathe his name to me, never remind
me that such a person lives. You are the only
child I will ever know again."

"Oh, dear guardian, don't speak so bitterly
of him. Your only son—don't judge him too
harshly. Think if you are mistaken—if you are
doing him injustice?"

"Never speak his name to me again while
we both live. He is dead to me as though six
feet of earth were on top of him. Better think
of him so than as he is."

He drew back and shut the door sharply in
her face. Oh, what could have brought this
change to him, the generous old man, quick to
anger, but always ready to forgive? Her heart
sunk like lead. She had never feared his boister-
ous passions. She feared him now, in this
intense, deadly calm.

She did that morning what she had avoided
doing for a fortnight past—met Dare alone.
Mrs. Grahame was not yet down; she never was
down until the fashionable world stirred from
its state of ante-meridian stagnancy, and Dare
had come un fashionably early, in the vague
hope of surprising this meeting.

"I had hardly hoped for such a favor," he
said. "Your favors have been few and far
between, Miss Carteret; you have amazed me
by the magnitude of this one."

"I don't want either compliments or sar-
casms, Mr. Dare. I want you to tell me what
Vane Vivian has been doing since he was here
yesterday. You know, if any one does. Have
you been instrumental in promoting the cause
of disturbance between his father and him?"

"From any one but you the question would
be an insult, and you do me injustice to think
it, Nora. You should know how faithfully I
have endeavored to cover Vane's shortcomings;
partly because of our old friendship,

partly, of late, I must confess, from a more
selfish motive—because I thought you would
approve. Even I have not been able to recon-
cile myself to Vane's course of late."

"You are willing he should be reconciled to
it, then? You have not told me what I asked:
what has he done? What has embittered the
colonel so against him since he went out last
night?"

"Miss Carteret, pardon me! You wish to
think well of Vane. Mine shall not be the lips
to tell you."

"You mean to convey the worst by that. I
ask, I command you, by all the regard you
have ever expressed for me, to tell me the
truth."

How inexpressibly fair she looked, in his
eyes, as she stood there, giving utterance to her
command so imperiously! She was plainly at-
tired in a morning-dress of silver gray, with
linen bands at her throat and wrists, with the
bright hair loosely coiled about the shapely
head, and he had never watched her with such
furtive, gloating eyes.

"If Miss Carteret commands her most faith-
ful servant has nothing left but to obey." Some-
thing under his servile manner, which
seemed to her fine perceptions insulting, some-
thing linking himself with her, brought the hot
blood tingling to her cheeks, but she was too
thoroughly in earnest to swerve from her pur-
pose now. "He has been gambling, but that
is no news to you. He has involved himself
over head and ears in debt, with not the slight-
est chance of getting out, now that the colonel
has broken with him—broken for good, I very
much fear."

"That is not all," said Nora, as he paused.
"I knew all that before. Go on, Mr. Dare."

"That is not all, unfortunately. Do you
know what a post-obit is, Miss Carteret? I see
you do. Well, it appears that Vane has been
raising money to clear himself of gambling-
debts by a post-obit. The colonel discovered
it by chance last night, and he has renounced
his son, he swears forever! I really think he
means it more earnestly than he ever meant
any thing in his life before. It was a cruel
cut, after all his leniency to Vane."

"I don't believe it," she said, her clear eyes
looking him through, and he bore their scruti-
ny unflinchingly.

"It is true, nevertheless. Judge for your-
self of his desperation when I tell you that he
tried to shoot himself after they had met in a
gambling-den, where, with his customary reck-
lessness, he had been adding to the burdens he
already bore. Tried to shoot himself, and
probably would have succeeded but for me. That
is one debt of gratitude I may expect to claim
from you, Miss Carteret."

"I think if the truth were told it is more
than counterbalanced. How did Colonel Vivian
come to be in such a place? He is not in the
habit of frequenting gambling dens. You
took him there, Owen Dare, just as you have
managed all the bitter misunderstanding be-
tween them, I do believe."

"You are plain-spoken and not chaitable,
Miss Carteret. The time will come when you
will give me greater credit."

"It will if you deserve it, without a doubt."
"You seem to hate me, Nora; and I—don't
merit your hate. I would sacrifice my life, if
needful, to your happiness."

"A much less sacrifice will suffice for that,
so far as you are concerned—the sacrifice of
these attentions which you persist in forcing
upon me. You must know how distasteful
they are to me."

dark path he was traversing, who can tell how much of the still darker future might have been spared?

Sir Rupert, looking down upon her, thought that womanly faith had never taken a more beautiful form.

"If he is not yet saved, and prove to you that he is worthy of your trust, it will be because no earthly power will avail," he said, earnestly. "Don't fear but he shall be saved, Miss Carveret."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 262.)

The Rival Brothers.

OR,
THE WRONGED WIFE'S HATE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING.

AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL MYSTERY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MOONLIGHT INTERVIEW.

LONG lances of moonlight streaming through the vast window, mingled with the light of two wax candles, and fell on the pale face of Eve Hazelwood, as she sat in an easy-chair, having her wounded forehead bound with long strips of court-plaster.

On two pale faces, for Una Forest was the surgeon, and her blue eyes were full of tender solicitude, as they rested on the colorless face of her patient.

"How pale you look, my dear!" her soft voice was pityingly saying. "I am sure your poor bruised forehead must be very painful."

Eve laughed good-naturedly.

"Oh, no. It is not very painful; it only feels a little stiff and sore. Don't I look shocking with all this plaster? Why could not I have bruised my arm or my head instead of my face, I wonder?"

"My love, you have reason to be thankful it was not your neck you broke! What would Monsieur D'Arville have done then?"

Eve blushed, as only sixteen years ever does, at the allusion. What a happy ride it had been for her, in spite of her cut face!

"And that reminds me," Miss Forest placidly went on, noting the telltale blush, "that you had better keep your room this evening, if you don't want to disengage him. Of course, our Eve must be pretty at all times, but I can assure her she is a great deal prettier without strips of court-plaster."

Eve glanced at herself in the mirror, and fully concurred in the opinion.

"It's too bad, but I suppose there is no help for it! My head feels a little dizzy and confused, too; and I think, on the whole, the best thing I can do is, to go to bed."

"Exactly, my dear! You will feel all right to-morrow morning, and your roses will have returned in full bloom. Now I shall fetch you some tea and toast and see you safely tucked in bed. Hazel must not disturb you to-night—she will make you ill and feverish with her little-tattle, and must keep her own room."

"How kind she is, after all!" thought Eve, as the little Albino tripped away, "and how Hazel and I have misjudged her! I feel as if I could go down into the valley of humiliation and beg her pardon on my knees for rash judgment."

"Oh, what a night it is! and how happy I am! I wonder what he is doing down-stairs! I wonder if he will miss me this evening!"

Alone as she was, she felt her face glowing, and covered it with her hands, with a little laugh at her own silliness. A soft rustling of silk made her look up. Miss Forest was there again, carrying a tray heavily laden with tea and toast, and marmalade.

"Now, my dear, take something before you retire, it will make you feel all the better to-morrow."

"How good you are, Miss Forest!" Eve cried out in the fullness of her heart, "to take all this trouble for me!"

Oh, Una Forest! little white hypocrite! had you ever in all your life been guilty of a blush, it should have been then! But the pale blue eyes only shifted away under the grateful glance of the luminous black ones, and the little fair hands twisted in and out among the plates.

"Don't mention it, my dear; it is nothing! Why do you not eat? You taste nothing."

"I am not hungry, thank you! I want nothing but the tea. And now I think I will lie down, and sleep away this dizzy head."

"And I will take away these candles, lest they should tempt you to sit up and read; and I will lock your door to keep that little tomboy, Hazel, from breaking in," said Miss Forest, laughing and nodding. "And now, my love, good-night and pleasant dreams to you!"

She kissed her as she spoke—the little female Judas—and left the room, putting the key in her pocket. She glanced back at it from the head of the stairs with a cold, glittering, evil smile.

"They may be pleasant to-night, pretty Eve," she said, softly, "but they will hardly be so sweet to-morrow night. You shall never be D'Arville's bride until my brain loses its power to plot, and my right hand its cunning to work."

She clenched the little dig* fiercely as she spoke, and went down-stairs to the parlor.

Hazel and D'Arville were there: the former jingling away at the piano; the latter holding a book, but seeing only a pair of black eyes, a shower of black curls, and a very young face, fresh and sunshiny as Hebe's own, looking up at him from every page.

Hazel stopped clattering the "Wedding March," whirled round on her stool and faced Una.

"Where's Eve?"

"In her room."

"Ain't she coming down?"

"Not to-night, she says. She has court-plaster on her forehead, and feels light-headed after her fall, so has gone to bed. I locked you out for the night."

"Locked me out?" shrilly cried Hazel.

"What is that for?"

"She thinks she will feel better alone, I suppose. All I know is, you are to keep your own room to-night."

"The hateful mean thing! I'll go and sleep in the attic with one of the maids, before I roost alone in there among all the ghosts and rats and other vermin. Eve's nothing but a nasty selfish thing!"

"My dear, if you are really afraid," said Miss Forest, blandly, "you can share my chamber for this one night."

"Oh," said Hazel, wilting down suddenly at the proposed cure, which was worse than the disease, "I guess I shan't mind it so much, after all. If Eve and the rest of you can face the ghosts alone, I dare say I can, too. Well, what's the matter now?"

For Miss Forest, putting her hand in her pocket suddenly, uttered a sharp exclamation of alarm.

D'Arville lifted an inquiring face from his book.

"I have lost my purse, and it contained

money to a large amount! I had it when I was out in the grounds this afternoon. I must have dropped it there."

D'Arville rose up.

"The night is clear as day; permit me to go out and search for it, Miss Forest."

Miss Forest hesitated.

"It is so much trouble."

"It is no trouble at all. In what part of the grounds were you?"

"Oh, in several places; but I think I may have dropped it near the old well, at the ash-trees. You know the place? I remember pulling my handkerchief out there to throw over my head, and may have pulled the purse out with it."

"What kind of purse was it?"

"A portmanteau of gold and ebony. It was a gift from a dear friend; and, independent of the money it contained, very valuable to me on that account. Hazel and I will go with you and help in the search."

The three started. All traces of the thunder-storm had disappeared, and the full moon rode in a cloudless sky, studded with countless stars.

As D'Arville had said, it was clear as day, and the old house looked quaint and picturesque in the silvery rays.

"What a lovely night!" Una exclaimed. "Who says it is all fog in England! Your blue Canadian skies were never brighter than that, Monsieur D'Arville!"

"The night is glorious, and old England a very pleasant place, Miss Forest. Hazelwood looks charming by moonlight."

"And Eve's gone to bed?" sentimentally put in Hazel, following his glance. "Her room is all in the dark. That's a bran-new idea of hers; for of late she has taken to sit at the window and star-gaze. I believe the girl's in love!"

"And who is the happy man, petite?" smilingly inquired Una.

"Oh, a friend of ours; either Senor Mendez, Mr. Schaffer, or Monsieur D'Arville, here. And," said Hazel, with an innocent face, "I really don't know which."

The dark Canadian face of D'Arville lit up with its rare smile.

"Mademoiselle, I thought Mr. Schaffer was your property?"

"Well, that's the very reason why Eve might want him too. One girl always does want what another possesses, and tries to cut her out. I know I should myself!"

"A very amiable trait in young ladies' characters. But, here we are at the ash-trees, and now for Miss Forest's purse."

But though they wandered up and down, and here and there, and in and out among the ash-trees, no glittering speck of gold and ebony flashed back the moonlight from the grass.

"We had better go over to the old well," said Una, anxiously; "it is just possible I may have dropped it there, and it is quite certain it is not here."

The "old well" was some half-dozen yards off—a lonesome spot, shaded by gloomy ash-trees, where few ever went. The three turned their steps in that direction—steps that awoke no echo on the velvet sward—when Hazel suddenly stopped and raised a warning finger.

"Hush!" she whispered. "Listen to that!"

"It is voices," said D'Arville, lowering his own.

"Some one is at the old well before us, and may have found our purse."

"Let us see who they are," said Una. "We can do it without being seen ourselves. I don't want to lose the purse, if I can help it. And—"

She stopped short, and laid her hand over Hazel's mouth, to stifle the cry that was breaking from her at the sight they beheld. In the clear moonlight, under the old oak-trees, two figures stood distinctly revealed. There was no mistaking their identity. The tall young man was Paul Schaffer; the girl, wrapped in a large shawl familiar to all three, with strips of white plaster on her forehead, was Eve Hazelwood.

Yes, Eve Hazelwood. There was no mistaking that beautiful face, that shower of shining hair, those lustrous black eyes, uplifted to the man's face. Together these two stood as only lovers stand, his arm encircling her waist, his head bent down until his own dark locks mingled with hers. They were talking, too, as only lovers talk; and as they moved away very slowly in an opposite direction, the listening trio distinctly caught every word. It was Paul Schaffer's laughing voice they heard first.

"And so the poor little Canadian schoolmaster has actually come to it at last, and you have won your bet. What a wicked little thing you are, Eve!"

"And I'm going to write to Kate, to-morrow, said the voice of Eve—that sweet and silvery voice."

"It was the night of the fête," you remember, Paul—that she and I made that memorable bet that I would not have the flinty professor at my feet before the end of three months. Kate thought him like Achilles, invincible; but I knew better, and to-day he came to it at last."

"Your fall was not so unlucky, then, after all," he laughed, and Eve joined in.

"What would you say, Paul, if I told you the fall was more than half planned? He was so tiresome and so long coming to the point, that some *ruse* was necessary, and that was the only one I could think of. It answered the purpose admirably. Oh, you should have heard him!"

"You pretty little sinner! And what do you suppose I am going to say to such goings-on, Mistress Eve?"

"Nothing at all, of course! You know I care for no one in the world but you, Paul. And I have not half done yet, for I mean to number Senor Mendez among my list of killed and wounded before I am satisfied."

"Now, Eve!"

"Now, Paul!"—with pretty willfulness—"I must, I tell you! My reputation as a beauty is at stake, and I feel in duty bound to humble the old grandee! Oh, what a splendid night it is! And they think I am sleeping the sleep of the just up in my room! My poor bruised forehead—laughing gaily—" was a fine excuse to steal out and meet you."

"Eve, what did you say to D'Arville?"

"Nothing at all. Do you think I am so poor a diplomat? But actions and looks, you know, sometimes speak louder than words. Oh, he has his answer, and is a happy man!"

"Poor fellow! Eve, you ought to have a little mercy!"

"Bah! you lecture, indeed! Why have you no mercy on Hazel? You do nothing but make love to her from morning till night, and pay no attention to me."

"My dear Eve, you mistake. She makes love to me! As to not noticing you, is it not some of your provoking diplomacy? I give you fair warning, I won't stand it much longer!"

The girl clasped his arm with both hands, and looked up in his face, with laughing, loving eyes.

"You dear, cross, good-natured Paul! It won't be necessary for you to stand it much longer. Once I have conquered Monsieur

Mustache Whiskerando, as Hazel calls him, I'll be good and obedient, and let you have your own way in everything. You know well enough I care for nobody but you. Do I not run risk enough in meeting you like this?"

There was a caress, and an answer breathed so low that they could not catch it; and then the lovers turned into a side-path, and disappeared. But both faces, as they turned, were for a second full toward them, with the bright moonlight shining full on them; and every vestige of doubt, if such a thing could still linger, vanished. Beautiful, treacherous, deceitful!

It was indeed the face of Eve Hazelwood—all her black curls fluttering in the nightwind; and that never bending over her, was Paul Schaffer, Hazel's false lover. Then they were gone, and only the cold, mocking moonlight remained where they had stood.

A spell seemed to have bound the three lookers-on to the spot. Their enrapturement broke it. There was a sound, something between a cry and a hysterical sob, from poor Hazel, as she grasped D'Arville's arm.

"Oh, Monsieur D'Arville, it is Paul and Eve!"

He had been standing as motionless as if changed to stone, his eyes never moving from the pair before him while they had remained. Now he turned to the poor little speaker, his face like white marble, but with pity in his deep, dark eyes for her.

"Yes, poor child! I have long known that this must come to you some day, but I never thought of its coming in this manner. We have both been deceived, Hazel—I far more than you."

"Can I believe my eyes! I feel as if I were dreaming! I always thought she disliked Mr. Schaffer," said Una Forest, with a bewildered look.

A smile, cold and bitter, and mocking, broke over D'Arville's face.

"Did you not hear the reason?—it was the young lady's diplomacy; she wished to win her bets and make more conquests. I have known this long time Mr. Schaffer was one of her admirers; but I was so well deceived by the fair diplomat that I imagined the love was all on his side. Miss Wood, get up—you had better go back to the house."

Poor Miss Wood! She had sunk down on the wet grass, sobbing hysterically; sobbing as a little child does, who has lost a precious toy. D'Arville raised her gently and drew her hand within his arm, and Hazel let herself be drawn away, weeping still, but "passive to all changes."

"You had better let her stay with you to-night, Miss Forest," he said, "and try and comfort her! Her dream has been broken rudely and bitterly enough."

"I shall do my best," Una said; "but, good heavens! who could have imagined this was Eve Hazelwood! I thought her simple as a child—pure as a saint."

"My mistake, exactly!" D'Arville said, with the same cold smile; "I have often heard how fair an outside falsehood hazel—I have never fully realized it before."

"I shall inform Mr. Hazelwood to-morrow," said Miss Forest, firmly; "it is my duty to put a stop to such shameful doings. Miss Eve will find she must turn over a new leaf for the future."

D'Arville said nothing—his heart was far too sore and bitter for mere words. When they entered the house and stood in the upper hall, on the way to their apartments, he stopped at his door and held out his hand to Una.

"Good-night, Miss Forest," he said; "let me thank you now for all the kindness you have shown me since I have been in this house. Be good to this poor little girl, and try and comfort her, if you can."

He was gone, and his door was shut. Una stood looking at it, with a puzzled face.

What does he mean—thanking me now, and with that look? He cannot mean to go! Oh, pshaw! of course not! come along, Hazel!"

She drew Hazel along to her room—poor Hazel, who did nothing but cry, and began early preparing for bed.

"Don't be a baby," was her consolatory address; "wipe your eyes and go to bed! Let Mr. Schaffer go—he was only fooling you all the time, and everybody saw it but yourself!"

"Oh, I wish I was dead—I do!" was Hazel's wicked but natural cry, her passionate sobs only increasing for their comfort. "Oh, I wish I had never been born!"

There was another in a room near, who, though he shed no tears, uttered no cry, was perhaps wishing the same in the bitterness of his heart. He was on his knees, not in prayer, alas! but packing his trunk, hustling everything in a heap, as men do. It did not take long—the trunk was packed, locked, strapped, so was his portmanteau, and then he sat down at the table to write. It was a letter, and a short one.

"SIR:—Pardon my hasty departure, but circumstances render it unavoidable. I desire no remuneration for the short time I have served you. Miss Forest may perhaps explain matters more fully to you, respectfully, CLAUDE D'ARVILLE."

The note was addressed to Mr. Hazelwood. Then, after a moment's hesitation, he began another.

"MY DEAR MISS FOREST:—After the scene we witnessed to-night, it is impossible for me to remain longer at Hazelwood. I leave by the train this morning, for London—from there I will send an address to which my luggage can be forwarded. Thanking you once more for your past kindness, and begging you to be good to poor Hazel, I remain your sincere friend, C. D'ARVILLE."

The gray dawn was creeping in, pale and cold, as he sealed this last, and arose. He put on an overcoat, for the air was chill, took his traveling-bag in his hand, and went down the grand stair-case, and out of the great hall-door of the Hazelwood mansion.

And so, while Eve slept and dreamed rosy dreams of to-morrow, the gray and dreary dawn of that to-morrow saw him of whom she dreamed, flying far from her as fast as steam could carry him, to the busy world of London.

CHAPTER XX.
A STORMY DAY.

RAIN lashing the windows, rain drenching the grass, rain dripping from the trees, rain blurring and blotting out every thing in a pale blank of sodden mist, and a high gale driving it in slanting lines before it—that was what Eve saw, looking from her chamber-window, next morning. A change had come over the night, and the cloudless sky and brilliant moonlight had been followed by a drear and dismal day. Agloomy prospect Eve's dark eyes looked on, the deserted avenue, the splashy country road beyond, the storm-beaten trees, writhing and tossing their long arms aloft, and the weird blast shrieking through them with a wild, human sort of cry. But the heart makes its own sunshine, and Eve was singing, half-unconscious, with a smile on her face like a happy child, singing a snatch of the sweet ballad somebody—her somebody—had sung months ago, at Madam Schaffer's fête.

"Ellen Adair, she loved me well,
Against her father and mother's will.

To-day I sat for an hour and wept
By Ellen's grave on the windy hill.
Shy she was, and I thought her proud—
Thought her cold and fled o'er the sea;
Filled with I with folly and spite.
When Ellen Adair was dying for me,
Cruel, cruel, were the words I said,
Cruel came they back to me."

She stopped short, and dropped the curtain over the window, with a delicious little shiver.

"What a song for me to sing this morning! Oh, how happy I am, and how good every one is to me! What a thankful heart I ought to have to the Author of all good gifts!"

There was a picture over her bed—"Christ Blessing Little Children." Eve's face grew grave and reverent, as she lifted her eyes to that divine countenance, so sublime in its calm majesty; and kneeling down, she bowed her head in her hands to say her morning-prayers. So long she knelt, that ten struck from the loud-voiced clock in the hall without, and a tap at the door only aroused her at last. She rose and opened it, and saw one of the housemaids standing there.

"Oh, is it you, Mary?" Eve said. "I suppose you have come to tell me breakfast is ready?"

"Yes, Miss, and Miss Forest is waiting. 'Is your face better this morning, Miss?'"

"Much better, thank you. Tell Miss Forest I will be down in a moment."

She had taken the disfiguring court-plaster off, and only a few red scratches remained. Eve took a parting peep at herself in the glass to make sure that her curls were smooth and her collar straight; and thought, with a smile and a blush, as she ran down-stairs, she would not look so very frightful in his eyes, after all. She might have spared herself the trouble. Una Forest only was in the room, standing at the table, waiting. One look at her face sent a chill to Eve's bounding heart; and had it been carved out of an iceberg or a snow-wreath, it could not have been whiter or colder. Her thin, pale lips were cold, compressed, smileless; her eyes as devoid of light or warmth as the sapphire stone; and even the rustle of her Quakerish gray dress had something chilling and repellent in its sound. Where was the kind, motherly, warm-hearted Una Forest of last night? Had she been a changeling of the radiant moonlight, that had gone forever and vanished with it?

"I have kept you waiting, I am afraid," Eve faltered, her air-castles shivering on their frail foundations.

"Yes," Miss Forest coldly said; "you have. Be good enough to take your place."

She poured out the coffee and passed the toast in a manner that effectually took away Eve's appetite; but indignation was coming to her aid now, and giving her courage. Miss Forest, watching her as a cat does some unfortunate mouse it is going to devour presently, saw a hot red spot coming into either cheek, a bright, angry light in either eye. What had she done to be treated like this? She had committed no crime, that she need be afraid. She would speak, and show Miss Forest she was no slave of her humors and whims.

"Where is cousin Hazel?" she demanded, looking up.

Una Forest's pale blue orbs met the bright black ones with a glance so cold, so stern, so severe, and so prolonged, that the outraged crimson rose in a fiery tide to Eve's brow.

"You want to know where Miss Wood is, do you?"

"Yes, Miss Forest."

"Then she is in my room, where she has been all night, too ill to leave it."

Eve rose precipitately.

"Hazel sick! When—how—what is—Miss Forest, must go to her at once!"

Miss Forest pushed aside her plate and cup and rose, too.

"I beg your pardon. You will do nothing of the kind."

"Miss Forest!"

"Miss Hazelwood—if that be your name—I am mistress here, I think, and accustomed to be obeyed. You do not set foot in my room, either to-day or any other day, while you see fit to remain at Hazelwood Hall!"

Eve stood looking at her, utterly confounded. Had Miss Forest suddenly gone mad? The cold, sweet voice of that pale little lady broke the brief silence.

"You thought no one was watching you last night, doubtless, when you held that shameful interview. You thought the lie you acted would never be discovered; but both are known now, and so you see, you wicked and shameless girl! And yet, after it all, you can dare to stand and look me in the face like this! Oh, I could blush for you, so young and so depraved!"

"Stand and look her in the face?"

Eve's great dark eyes were dilating in utter bewilderment, to twice their natural size, while every trace of color was slowly fading from her face.

"Go to your room, now," Miss Forest's pitiless voice continued, as she moved to the door; "to one more injured than I, I leave the task of upbraiding you. Go to your room, unhappy girl, and remain there until sent for."

She was gone, but Eve never moved. She stood literally rooted to the spot, so completely lost in wonder, so utterly dumbfounded by this amazing and vague charge of crime, that she scarcely knew whether she were asleep or awake. She passed her hand over her face in a bewildered way.

"What does she mean! What did she say I had done?" she asked herself, confusedly. "I don't understand at all! Go to my room and say there! What will I do that for? I will not do it. No, I will not! If Miss Forest has gone mad, I will find out what she means."

Indignation had come to the rescue again. Eve's spirit, naturally bright, flashed up in her pale face, kindling a red glow there, and blazed like black flame in the flashing eyes. Impetuously, she started after Miss Forest, but Miss Forest was not to be found. She had given a brief order about dinner and had gone away, and the servants knew nothing of her. With a step that rung and rebounded, Eve marched across the upper hall, and knocked at her door. There was no answer; and though she knocked again and again, it was all labor lost. Eve stood and listened, the angry blood coursing tumultuously through every throbbing vein.

"She is in there, I know," was her thought, "and she hears me well enough. I shall not stir from here until she comes out, if I have to wait the whole day long."

Too excited to stand still, the girl began pacing rapidly and vehemently up and down the long hall, watching the door that never opened. No, indeed; why should it, when there was another door within that chamber communicating with the lower hall, of which she knew nothing. So Eve trod up and down like a handsome young Pythoness going into training for expeditions as an Amazon sentry, while Miss Hazel was serenely attending to her duties down-stairs. So, while hour after hour of the dark, rainy day wore on, Eve paced her lonely bed undisturbed—for not

even the housemaid came near her—until she grew so completely exhausted that she could walk no longer. Even then she would not leave, so sure was she that there was some one within; but seated herself within the wide window-ledge at the end of the hall, and gazed out at the bleared and desolate evening, with all its own gloom on her face. Oh, where was D'Arville! Where was Hazel! Had they all deserted her together? Had they all gone crazed with Una Forest?

(To be continued—commenced in No. 257.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

"OUT OF TOWN."

ETTA's eyes lingered pleasantly upon Chester Starke's frank and manly face. He was there with her father's indorsement, and that was sufficient to incline her mind favorably toward him.

She felt that she could accept him as a friend, for her father's sake—and a little for his own; for she was favorably impressed by his appearance.

You may imagine that this was a case of "love at first sight" between them. Perhaps it was. But I think all cases of love begin at first sight, only some, as in all other cases, are more violent than others. The nature of the attack depends

Etta released herself blushing, but the praise of her father's old friend fell very pleasantly upon her ears. As she drew back Kate advanced to Ossian, deeply impressed by what he had said, exclaiming:

"You may kiss me, too, if you like."

"Thank you, I'm not particular," responded Ossian, dryly; and he turned away.

"Oh!" murmured Kate, a little resentfully.

"Never mind; if he won't, I will!" cried Ray, roughly; and he gave her a resounding kiss.

"Oh!" murmured Kate, again, but not at all resentfully this time.

"What's the matter? Did it hurt you?" inquired Ray, with mock concern.

"Oh, no; but I think you are rather free on short acquaintance."

A hearty laugh from the rest followed, and the Bartyne said:

"Now we must get things in shape. Ossian, you summon your colored aid, and let her show the girls to their room. Let her take their trunk up."

"I'll do that!" cried Ray.

Ossian fastened his gray eyes keenly upon the detective's face.

"Pears to me you're mighty obliging, young man," he said.

"I always try to be," answered Ray.

Ossian's gray eyes twinkled strangely.

"I feel as if I could kiss you, too," he rejoined.

"I beg you won't," returned Ray, and he retreated, as if he really thought Ossian was in earnest.

Ossian chuckled to himself, went into the hall, called the colored woman, whose sudden appearance denoted that she was not very far off when she was called, and her anxiety to make herself useful.

The girls were shown to their room, which was the front chamber up one flight of stairs, and Ray carried up their trunk.

"He's as strong as a mule!" remarked Ossian, in his dry fashion.

"And as brave as a lion!" returned Bartyne.

"You'll like him better, Ossian, when you come to know him better."

"So'll you, Peter?"

"No doubt—no doubt!"

The men gathered in the parlor again.

"Now to business," began Bartyne. "Did you close the office, Chester?"

"No, sir; I left Jim in charge. He can be trusted to take any new orders that may come. In fact, we can not supply any new customers, as you know. It is as much as we can do to supply the old ones."

"True; but we must go down to the office and put things in shape; this affair has unsettled matters. Then these villains must be attended to. Do you think it advisable to make a descent upon them to-night?" he inquired of Ray.

"Most decidedly. If we don't find them there to-night, we never will," answered the detective; "and I'm afraid it is too late as it is."

"Perhaps it is, but we'll make the attempt. Ossian, we will leave you here in charge."

"Are you going without your disguise, Peter?" asked Ossian, for Bartyne had cast it off.

"No more disguises for me, Ossian. The villains must know I am alive by this time. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," responded Ray. "Doctor Water-vliet could tell them that. How cheap they must have felt when they arrived and found Etta gone. Ha! ha! ha!"

His laugh was so infectious that they all joined in it.

"Well, it will be some little time before they can trace us here," said Bartyne; "and we must try to trace and secure them first. We won't be back here until late, Ossian."

"Very well."

"Come!"

"One moment," said Ossian; "I want to speak to this young man first."

"You haven't another presentation of evil, eh, Ossian?" Bartyne asked, uneasily.

"Oh, no; I see nothing but good before us now. You go on, and wait for him at the gate."

Bartyne and Chester Starke left the house, wondering at this singular proceeding on the part of Ossian Plummer.

"Well, my friend, what have you to say to me?" asked Ray, when they were alone.

Ossian laid his hand impressively upon the young man's arm.

"I know who you are," he said.

Ray stared in astonishment into the gray eyes of that hard-featured face, and the gray eyes smiled kindly upon him.

"The deuce you do!" he exclaimed.

"I do!" responded Ossian, nodding his head significantly.

Ray laughed, crying:

"Well, that's odd! For a week ago I didn't know myself. You're a long-headed, keen-witted individual."

"I'm a Yankee, and we're given to guessing. Do you mean to tell him?"

"Of course; but not yet."

"When?"

"When this cruel war is over—that is to say, when his enemies are destroyed—my enemies as well as his!"

"Why not now?" urged Ossian, laying his hand affectionately upon the young man's shoulder.

"It is not time; the case is not worked out yet. Let me finish up this business first."

Ossian reflected over this for a moment.

"Perhaps you are right," he answered. "Go then, but be careful of yourself, be careful of him."

"You can depend upon that. Take care of yourself, old boy!"

With this parting salutation, Ray hastened to join Peter Shaw and Chester Starke, whom he found waiting for him at the gate.

"What did Ossian have to say to you?" inquired Peter Shaw.

"Not much," answered Ray. "He wished to impress the necessity of caution in our proceedings upon my mind."

"Yes; Ossian is prudence personified. In fact he has rather astonished me during this visit of his to New York. He seems changed in a measure—different from his old self."

"How so?"

"Why shrewder and keener."

"He's smart!" rejoined Ray, with conviction.

"You like him, then?"

"Very much!"

"I thought you would. There's a good heart within his rugged breast. Ossian Plummer is a friend in a thousand. He is honesty itself, and as steadfast as his trust as the green hills of his native State. Ah! I should not be where I am to-day if it had not been for Ossian Plummer and his sister Almira. He's shrewd enough, but she's his superior in intellect. She's the smartest woman I ever saw. Don't you think so, Chester?"

"I do indeed, sir."

Conversing in this manner they walked to

Third avenue, and there took passage on a car down-town.

Jim Bates was delighted to see them when they arrived at the office, having grown somewhat weary of being left there alone.

An hour was devoted to business, and then Genni Bartyne (I may as well drop the name of Peter Shaw now) and Frank Ray went to the police headquarters in Mulberry street to make arrangements for the capture of the False Faces that night.

This matter being settled, Frank proposed that they should take a stroll by the house that contained the lodge room of the False Faces.

"It's a roundabout way to your office, sir," he said, "but I think it might be advisable if you could spare the time."

"Certainly," answered Bartyne.

They walked in that direction, and as they walked briskly they soon reached the house.

"I thought so!" exclaimed Ray, pausing at the door.

"What is it?" inquired Bartyne.

"Do you perceive any change here?"

Bartyne surveyed the house.

"The blinds of the doctor's windows are closed," he answered.

"Is that all?"

Bartyne looked again.

"I don't perceive anything else," he replied.

"Where's his sign?" inquired Ray.

"Why, it's gone!"

"Yes; and the doctor's gone, too!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, sir, the birds are flown. I thought they would not stop long here. They are wide awake, sir; they were not going to give us a chance to catch them. Our only hope was to surprise them. Our coming for Etta gave them the alarm."

"But if we had left her an hour longer in their hands they would have spirited her away to some retreat which we might have been weeks in searching for."

"Very true, sir."

"I had rather that they should escape than that any harm should have befallen her."

"You were right, sir; so had I; but, I confess, I feel a strong anxiety to trap these rascals—and I shall never feel satisfied until I do."

"You think then that they have abandoned this house?"

"Undoubtedly, sir. Don't you see the bill: 'Apartments to Let'?"

"Really, you appear to notice everything," answered Bartyne, surprisedly. "I did not attach any particular significance to that as there are bills on both the houses upon either side, as you see."

"Oh, yes, there's always some apartments to let in these kind of houses, and so the bill 'To Let' becomes a chronic attachment to the door-post. But I observed in this bill that the apartments to let are the very ones occupied by the doctor and the False Faces; and there is a newness to this bill which shows that it has been renewed to-day."

"Upon my word! your discernment is of the keenest kind!" exclaimed Bartyne, approvingly. "I never should have noticed that."

"It's my business, sir. The smallest trifle sometimes leads to a great result."

Ray rang the bell vigorously, and they could hear it through the door sounding loudly in the hall.

"What are you about to do now?" inquired Bartyne.

"Make some inquiries to see if those fellows have left any clue by which they may be traced; I hardly expect it though."

The door opened, and the slatternly female, who had charge of the premises, appeared.

"Can you tell me where Doctor Water-vliet has moved?" inquired Ray, in his most winning manner.

"He's gone out of town," replied the female.

"Out of town?" echoed Ray; he had not expected such an answer as this. "Do you know which way?" he asked.

"Yes. He told me that he had got a Government appointment to go to the navy yard at Pensacola, as they have got the yellow fever very bad down there."

"Ah! thank you. I see that the upper floor is to let."

"Yes, the doctor had that as a surgery—I think he called it. Would you like to look at it, sir?"

"What's the rent?"

"Twelve dollars a month."

"Hum! no—I guess we won't trouble you—it's a little too high."

"Why that's cheap!"

"I allude to the altitude of the floor," answered Ray, laughing. "I'm afraid it's too high up in the world for us. Thank you; good day!"

Ray walked away and Bartyne followed him.

"Do you think this doctor has really gone to Pensacola?" he inquired; when they had walked some little distance from the house.

"Not he! That's an ingenious device to throw us off the scent. He is still in the city, and I have a shrewd suspicion that his confederates are here also. But that nest is empty. There is no use making any descent there to-night. They've gone, bag and baggage."

"There's no doubt of that. They moved with a surprising celerity. I don't see how we are going to trace them."

"That's for me to find out. They may baffle us at the start, but when the law begins to chase a party of scoundrels in earnest it's bound to run them down at last."

"What do you purpose to do next?"

"Hunt up this lawyer, Selkreg. I'm just going to his office now. I'd like to ascertain if he has gone out of town also."

"Shall I go with you?"

"Well, yes, it's on the way to your office, and it will satisfy your mind, and save me the trouble of making a report to you."

They proceeded to Center street and stopped at the dilapidated wooden house that bore Cebra Selkreg's sign upon it.

"Here's the shyster's office," said Frank Ray.

Going up the dingy stairs they found the door of Selkreg's office locked, and a card tacked upon it bearing this inscription: "Out of town."

Ray smiled as he saw it.

"I thought so!" he cried. "I've got a game of hide-and-seek before me."

They descended to the street.

"What next?" inquired Bartyne.

"You may as well go to your office, sir, and I will return to headquarters," replied Ray.

"We can do nothing to-night, and I must change the arrangement. All you have to do now is to go on with your business as usual, and leave the affair in my hands. When I discover anything I will let you know."

On this they separated.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 252.)

A SUPPRESSED resolve will betray itself in the eyes.

The Dumb Page: OR, THE DOGE'S DAUGHTER.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE IRISH CAPTAIN," "THE RED RAJAH," "THE ROCK RIDER," "THE SEA CAT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.
THE END OF ALL.

A GLOOMY picture was presented, some hours later, by the Secret Hall of the Council of Three.

This was the last dread tribunal of Venice, above even the better known Council of Ten.

Its sittings were held in secret. Judges and attendants were alike habited in black, and sworn to secrecy on all points.

In a deep, vaulted hall, or rather dungeon, built in the foundations of the ducal palace, the meeting was held. The massive stone arches, and great slabs of pavement, were faintly illumined by the light of several swinging lamps, that hung from iron rings in the ceiling. The atmosphere was cold and damp, for the hall was below sea level, and the soaking waters were only kept out by the tough hydraulic cement.

On one side of an oval stone table were three great chairs or thrones, also of stone, and in these sat three silent figures, draped from head to foot in black robes and in deep shadow.

On the table, extended on a pallet, lay Don Lorenzo Bellario, pale as a corpse, but still with his eyes open, and able to breathe faintly. His wounds were all neatly bandaged. Standing before the table was Antonio Bonetta, in full Genoese uniform, but with his hands fettered. Next to him was the false page, the princess Julia, and she also was fettered. Then there was a chair.

Seated in that chair, and cold and rigid, was the dead body of the ill-starred Annetta, who had assumed the role of princess, to meet her death from the hand of her sister.

Then there was a circle of black, silent figures in long robes, who bore in their hands naked swords; the familiars.

The room was still as death, till the judge, who sat on the middle throne, asked, in a deep, tremulous voice:

"Are the prisoners here?"

"Ay, my lord!" answered one of the dark familiars out of the shadow.

"Name them."

The familiar advanced and called out:

"Don Lorenzo Bellario."

"Here!" was the faint response from the table.

"Captain Bonetta."

"Count Bonetta, of the service of Genoa," corrected the Swiss officer, in a defiant manner.

"Annetta, page and mistress," continued the official, quite regardless of the interruption.

There was no response. The question was repeated.

"Dead!" answered a low voice, that of the false page.

The judge in the center started, and threw back the cowl from his head. Then one could see that it was the blind Doge himself.

"Who spoke?" he demanded, in a trembling voice.

The judge on his right caught him by the sleeve, and whispered for some moments in his ear. When he had finished, the old man bowed his face on his hands, and appeared to be greatly agitated. Presently he raised his head and said, in a broken voice:

"It is just. The sins of the fathers are visited on the children. Read the accusation against Captain Bonetta."

At a sign from the silent judge the familiar read, in a monotonous voice:

"Antonio Bonetta, captain of the Swiss Guards of the State of Venice, is accused, out of the Lion's Mouth, of conspiring to deliver the fleets of Venice into the power of the Turk. A letter from the vizier of the Grand Turk was found concealed in the holster of the said Captain Bonetta, at his quarters in the Swiss barracks by the arsenal, alluding to a previous demand for money on the part of said Captain Bonetta, for services to be rendered by him and consenting thereto. The said Captain Bonetta is also accused of deserting the service of Venice without leave, and fleeing to foreign parts to escape the punishment of treason to the republic on the day of the accusation from the Lion's Mouth."

"Antonio Bonetta," said the deep, tremulous voice of the old Doge, "what have you to say to this?"

Bonetta raised his head proudly.

"For the desertion," he answered, "I say Not Guilty. I sent in my resignation to the commander of my battalion before I left the city. It is a custom among the free Swiss to do so, if it shall seem good to them. I owe no fealty to Venice, since I signed my name to that paper. Send to the commandant, and you will find it so."

One of the cowed judges made a rapid sign, and a familiar glided from the room. The Doge looked as if perplexed, as he asked:

"And what allied thee in Venice, Bonetta, that thou shouldst leave it? Were we not kind to thee?"

Bonetta's voice trembled for the first time.

"Most kind, my lord," he said. "Too kind to the humble soldier of fortune. Man could not have been happier than I, till the fatal day that man crossed my path."

And he pointed to Don Lorenzo, who smiled faintly, with a strange, derisive smile.

"My lords," he continued, "of the charge of correspondence with the Turk, I am innocent. The man who put the accusation into the Lion's Mouth doubtless hid the letter in my room. I accuse Don Lorenzo Bellario of being the man who did both, and I call on you to compare the writing of the two letters with those of any undoubted letters of his that you can find."

Again Don Lorenzo smiled. The Doge answered in a sad tone:

"Would that we could believe thy tale, Bonetta. But the letter was recognized by the council as being written by the vizier himself."

"Then God help the cause of truth!" said the Swiss, "for I cannot understand it."

"What was thy reason for leaving Venice then?" asked one of the judges, sharply.

"Tell us the truth, mind, for the rack lies in the next room."

Bonetta drew himself up haughtily.

"It needs no rack to make a Swiss speak truth, my lord," he said. "I left Venice, badly wounded in a duel by Don Lorenzo Bellario. He picked a quarrel with me to avenge my having prevented, along with a noble lady, his abduction of the princess, Julia Dandolo, daughter to my lord, the Doge. He wounded me, and left me, as he thought, for dead. I was picked up by a fisherman, and taken home across the bay. And then, my lords, a gay barge passed me, with music and mirth, and I saw my betrothed bride therein, while I lay at death's door; and Don Lorenzo's arm was round her, my lords, while she, false, perjured one, sung with him a gay love song, and I not twenty feet off. My lords, the heart that Lorenzo's rapier spared was wrenched in twain by the jeweled fingers of a woman. Do with me what you will. I have had my vengeance at last on him. All the rest is gail and ashes now."

There was a deep silence as he ended his bitter speech. It was broken by a stifled sob from the shadow where the familiars stood.

Then the cold, passionless voice of the cowed judge said:

"And you left Venice for a cross in love?"

"I left Venice for vengeance, my lord," said Bonetta, grimly. "The trodden worm became a serpent with a sting. I went to Florence, and learned all the mysteries of fence with Cola Bottarino. I swore to come back and punish Don Lorenzo. Then, suddenly, I heard that the hue and cry was out against me, for treason to Venice—I, who had periled my life so often for her against the Turk. Then I went to Genoa, and told my story to the council, and they took me with open arms to their service. They have no Lion's Mouth in Genoa to slander brave soldiers behind their backs. I came back, and the first man I saw was this same Don Lorenzo, and with him her, the false one. I insulted him with a purpose, fought him down, and now there he lies—curse him forever! triumphant, even now, that he has robbed me of my only love."

There was a sudden commotion among the dark familiars. One of them dropped the naked sword to the ground with a clash, rushed forward, before any one could stir, and threw back the black hood from her head, revealing the lovely face of Estella Milleroni, suffused with tears!

She fell on her knees at Bonetta's feet and seized his hands, manacled before him, covering them with kisses and tears.

"Antonio, my lord, my love!" she cried: "it is thee indeed. Oh! forgive me that I doubted thee, and kill me."

But the judges rose with one accord at this interruption.

"The Countess Milleroni!" exclaimed one; "how came she here?"

"I will tell you, my lords," answered the lady, boldly; "I came in disguised as you see, with the order of one of your noble selves. Had it not been for me, Count Bonetta would not be in your hands. I suspected the duel, and gave you the information that led to his capture, because I wished him to have a fair trial, as was promised me, by two of your noble selves. And now I tell all the world my belief that he is innocent, and I crave his pardon on my knees, martyr that he is, for doubting him on the evidence of yonder dying traitor."

There was a movement of distrust among the judges. One of them threw back his cowl, disclosing the features of Count Foscarei.

"Foscarei," he said, bitterly, in a low tone. "It is you who have betrayed our secrets to this woman."

"Hush!" replied the other, apart; "we can afford to be just for once. Here comes the messenger."

The three judges sunk back on their seats, as the familiar entered the room with a large letter, which he handed to Count Foscarei. The latter broke it open and handed it to Foscarei triumphantly, saying:

"The captain's story is true. Here is his resignation."

Count Foscarei looked it over, and nodded ill-temperedly.

"Well, well," he said; "so far, so good. But the letter from the vizier remains to be accounted for."

There was an awkward silence. Bonetta stood looking at the countess, hope, fear, doubt, love, and bitterly lacerated feeling, struggling together in his rugged face. She, on her part, was weeping softly, kissing those fettered hands, and regarding him with inexpressible penitence and love.

Julia Dandolo had been standing with down-cast head, silent and apparently sullen, during the whole of the proceedings. Suddenly she raised her head and said, in a strangely low, hushed tone:

"I can account for it, my lords."

There was a pause of utter astonishment. Even Don Lorenzo turned his head with a look of wonder.

LOVE IN THE COUNTRY.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Oh, hand in hand, by sylvan streams,
We'd wander forth at noon,
Our footsteps keeping measure with
The merry troglodytes' tune;
The sylvan nymphs would lead our way
When we went out to chop down hay.

Withdrawn afar from all the world
Content should lend its charm,
And crown with peace our mortal lot—
And eighty-acre farm.
I'd shield her form from dangers thick,
And milking cows that love to kick.

No cloud should ever dim our sky
To make our lives forlorn;
Eternal sunshine e'er should gild
Our heads in boisterous corn,
And patience e'er should be her dower
In churning butter hour by hour.

All jealousies and faults of faith
Should from our pathway shrink,
Affection she would have for me,
And buttermilk to drink;
And she should daily gather grace
And eggs upon the market days.

A golden halo of hope and rest
Should hover o'er her head,
And she would keep her heart at peace
And all the goings fed.
She'd keep our lives from being sad,
And mix some good eggs with the bad.

Her good should be my sole desire,
Her gentle will my law,
And plenty grace our dear estate—
Inherited from her pa.
In queenly robes she'd be arrayed
All out of linsey-woolsey made.

The light of love should haunt her eyes,
The beacon light of hope,
In bringing peace she should excel,
Also in making soap.
She'd make more sweet life's running sands,
And cook for six or seven hands.

Her life with all things fair and sweet
Let kindly fate endow,
And may she learn to love me more
And drive the glittering blow,
And our life's happiness would be great
If corn went at a decent rate.

The Snow Hunters:
OR,
WINTER IN THE WOODS.BY C. DUNNING CLARK,
AUTHOR OF "YOUNG SEAL-HUNTER," "IN THE
WILDERNESS," "CAMP AND CANOE,"
"ROD AND RIFLE," ETC., ETC.X.—Canada Hare.—The Cunning Glutton.—
Southward.

We might follow our hunters in the pursuit
Of the smaller game with which the woods
abounded, and tell of the mink, the beaver and
the other which became the prey of stout Dave
Blodgett and his new chum, but time does not
permit. It is enough to say that they passed
a pleasant month in the region of snow, and
the sides of the cabin were hung with a hun-
dred trophies of the chase. Heads of wapiti,
moose and elk adorned the walls. The two
panthers and the glared at all intruders from
the roof of the cabin, and the two cubs, now
playmates of Jack Edgel, played tricks with
each other in a wooden cage in the corner, op-
posite two beautiful small "silver fox," which
had been trapped by Alf especially for Jack
Edgel. All this curiosity-shop was called by
Rufe "Jack's Museum."

Dave came in, one morning, in a fury. A
wolverine had been stealing beaver out of his
traps, and he was determined to punish the
thief.

"I'm goin' out to rig a deadfall, Jack," he
said, "an' I'll catch that bloody thief, some-
how. Come with me."

They started out and reached the place where
the first trap had been robbed. In the path of
this Dave set a large bear-trap, which he care-
fully concealed among the brushwood. Near
the other trap which had been robbed, he rig-
ged a deadfall baited with scented pemmican.
To reach the bait the animal must crawl under
the log, and the moment the bait was touched
the log would fall.

"Dave," suggested Jack, when these prepara-
tions were concluded, "I have heard a great
deal about the cunning of the wolverine, and I
want to see them work. Can't we hide some-
where and watch him?"

"I'll do it," said Dave. "Cunning ain't no
name for 'em. You'll see one of the 'cutest
critters on the face of the air, ef you see him
at all. Let's go an' knock over a few rabbits
before supper, an' I'll make you a stew that'll
make your eyes stick out of your head."

They tramped away through the snow for a
distance of two miles, where they met Alf,
who was leading Spot.

"All 'ee time me catchum Canada hare," he
said. "You got gun? All right— you
watchee."

He loosed Spot on a fresh trail, and he bound-
ed away on a hot scent, making the forest ring
with his cries, as he howled over the snow.
The cries receded and the men advanced in
the direction of the sound.

Jack was in advance, when he saw a great
hare, leaping like a kangaroo, come flying over
the logs, while close behind came Spot, yelp-
ing as he bounded through the snow. Jack
fired when the hare was in the air, and dropped
his game neatly.

"Quick eye, steady hand," exclaimed Dave,
approvingly. "You are the stuff we make
hunters of, my chicken. Call in the dog, Alf,
and let's try another."

The hound was again started on a fresh
scent, which took him some distance into the
forest. As they advanced, a great white bird,
gleaming like snow in the sun, rose over them.
The ready rifle of Dave Blodgett came up and
the great white bird came tumbling down.
Dave caught it up and held it in such a way
that the blood could not drop on its white
plumage.

"That's a specimen that'll do yer heart
good," cried Dave. "The 'great snowy owl'!
my boy!"

It was indeed one of the most magnificent
specimens of this rare bird ever secured by a
hunter. White as the driven snow, with
spreading wings and staring eyes, the great
bird hung in the powerful hand of the hunt-
er.

By this time the dog was on the scent again,
and long before nightfall the hunters had se-
cured a goodly "bag," and returned to the
cabin, where they feasted gloriously.

Alf volunteered to take Mr. Tracey and the
twins out on a farrowed "fire hunt," while Jack
and Dave started out to watch their wolverine.
They reached the place early, and Dave con-
structed a cover near the first trap from which
they could watch unseen the movements of
the glutton.

The creature came two hours after, stealing
along with cat-like steps until he came to the
spot where Dave had thrown the brush care-
lessly over the trap. Here the animal paused
and looked dubiously at the leaves and brush.
There was a studied carelessness about the ar-
rangement of this cover which did not suit the

suspicious beast. He seemed to say—"My
friend was nabbed in just such a spot as that,
and I strongly suspect iron under those bushes.
I do upon my word."

Some such idea as this must have passed
through the head of the wolverine as he stood
with his short ears working industriously and
his head thrown upon one side like a cat.

He evidently deemed it highly improper to
pass over those leaves and brush without first
making an examination; so he searched about
and found upon the ground a stout stick about
three feet long and about an inch thick. This
the wolverine took in his mouth, and allowing
one end to rest upon the bush, pushed it before
him in every direction, while Dave, in an ag-
ony of rage, made ready his rifle. Just then
the stick happened to strike the spring, and he
held the bear trap dangling in the air, while
the wolverine walked serenely beneath and
robbed the beaver trap before their very eyes!
Having devoured the game, the glutton began
to search about for the second trap, which he
had robbed the night before, and Jack, follow-
ing Dave Blodgett, glided after in silence, and
they crouched in the bushes just as the wol-
verine caught sight of the bait beneath the
dead-fall.

One common sized beaver is a mere flea bite
to a healthy wolverine, and this one was still
as hungry as ever. He looked at that spiced
pemmican with longing eyes. He knew
that it was spiced pemmican—he could smell
it, even at a distance, and knew that it was
good. But, was there not something remark-
able in the manner in which this food was hung
under the log? Was not the log itself in rather
a tottering position? and would it be at all
healthy for a wolverine to creep under that
log without first ascertaining that it was not
going to fall down? The meat was good—but
would it pay for the getting?

The wolverine considered the matter in all
its bearings. He wanted the meat badly
enough, but that was a heavy log.

"He'll study out, some way, the mean old
cuss," hissed Dave; "but he don't git away
this time. You jest wait."

The wolverine at last leaped upon the log,
and digging his claws into the bark, reached
down and pushed the meat hard. The dead-
fall came down, but the wolverine sat trium-
phant on the top, seeming to exult over his own
acuteness, but, just then came the crack of the
never-failing rifle, and the animal dropped life-
less on the log.

"Chaw that, darn ye!" roared Dave. "That's
a dead-fall you kain't dodge, an' I know it."

They returned quite late to the cabin, and be-
gan their preparations for the return to the
haunts of civilization. The hunters came back
with two deer which they had taken by fire-
hunting on the ice.

The time for their tarry in the North was
up, and they must return to their duties in the
South. When morning broke they loaded the
sleds, leaving many heavy articles in the cabin
for the use of other hunters. Alf and Dave had
built a third sled, and it was necessary, for
Jack's trophies filled one sled to overflowing;
and so, one bright morning they bade farewell
to the winter camp, and sped away along the
ice toward the South. Dave and Alf went
with them, and did not part from them until
two weeks later, they shook hands at the G. T.
depot in Toronto.

"Good-by, square; good-by, boys," said
Dave. "Ef you want me next year write to
me at Lower Saranac. I'm going down there
to see Antoine Castler—me an' Alf. He's my
pard now."

"All 'ee same," said Alf. "Me catch Bill
Becker me lickes him. Good-by!"

So they left the hunters standing on the plat-
form as the train, bearing the trophies of their
skill, safely packed in the baggage cars, moved
off. And if Providence is good to them it will
not be long before, with rifle and ax, with Dave
Blodgett and Alf in front, they will again
tramp the snows of the North, on the trail of
the giant moose.

Reader, the Snow Hunters, for the present,
bid you farewell.

LEAVES
From a Lawyer's Life.

BY A. GOULD PENN.

II.—The Unjust Will.

Men sometimes make strange disposition of
their property by will, and after their demise
leave behind them a bone of contention for
heirs to quarrel over, when a little foresight
and sense of justice would have saved all the
trouble and expense. Great injustice is thus
done, perhaps through mere thoughtlessness or
carelessness, and it seems to me that no man
in his senses would willingly commit such a
grave error.

How often have I been called upon to draw
the instrument that I plainly foresaw could
only produce pain, hatred and heart-burnings!
But it was mine only to obey and not question
the wisdom of my employers. A case in point
once happened in my practice.

Stepping into my office one day, after a
brief absence, I found a lady awaiting my
coming. She was dressed in deep mourning,
with a heavy veil over her face, and as I en-
tered she arose and cast aside its black folds,
revealing to my gaze a face of astonishing
beauty. She was young, apparently not more
than twenty, and her beauty was heightened by
a look of unusual intelligence.

"You are Mr. Smith?" she asked, hesitat-
ingly.

"At your service, Miss—"

"Garnett is my name—Alda Garnett," she
hastened to explain.

"Ah! yes, Miss Garnett; I knew your fa-
ther well. What service can I render you,
Miss Alda?"

"I have come to consult with you in refer-
ence to papa's will. You know the circum-
stances already, no doubt?"

Yes, I had heard of Johnson Garnett's will,
and the matter had been the cause of much in-
dignation among the good people of the neigh-
borhood. Johnson Garnett had been consid-
ered somewhat eccentric in his manners. He
had accumulated a large fortune, and Alda,
his only daughter, had been looked upon by
everybody as his sole heir, and respected, flattered
and courted accordingly. But Johnson
Garnett had brought with him from England
many old and strange conceits, and when, at
his death, his will was read, it was found that
he had left to his faithful daughter but a trifle
of a few thousands, while the remainder of his
possessions, including Emerald Hill, his home-
stead, he had willed to one Johnson Kyle.

"And who is this Johnson Kyle?" I asked of
Miss Alda.

"Some old friend of papa's—schoolmate or
something, I believe. I have heard papa
speak of him frequently, but I never have
learned more of him."

"Is he at all related?" I asked.

"I do not know; he may be some distant

relative of papa's. But oh, Mr. Smith, can
nothing be done by which I may obtain my
just rights?" she asked, the tears gathering in
her beautiful eyes.

"I fear it will be a difficult matter, Miss
Garnett, to break this will, unless we can es-
tablish the fact that your father was under
undue influence, or not of sound mind, and
those things require very positive evidence in-
deed."

A gleam of hope lighted up her splendid
eyes.

"I am sure papa was not in the mind to
make that will," she exclaimed. "He often
told me I was his sole heir, and I can prove
by old nurse that he said so more than once.
And besides, we often feared he was not in his
right mind, and many strange things he did
that caused me to fear for his reason. But
papa was always good to me."

Having obtained such information and facts
of Miss Garnett as I deemed necessary, she
left my office with lighter heart than she had
entered.

I set about to work up the case, and after
some time spent in study and examination, I
drew the necessary papers for commencing
suit to break the unjust will of Johnson Gar-
nett. I soon learned that the firm of Leex and
Brief had been retained against me, and I
knew that the litigation must be long and
tedious.

I also learned that the devise, Johnson
Kyle, was a rich man, who spent his time
travelling the world over in search of pleasure
and adventure, and that he had but recently
returned to America.

A year had passed away, and the prelimi-
naries of this great will contest were about set-
tled, and soon the issue would be tried. Busi-
ness called me away to a neighboring city,
where I was detained several days.

Seated in the hotel, one evening, I was busy
with my own thoughts, unheeding the usual
loungers who were talking around me, when a
name caught my ear and caused me to look
and listen attentively.

Two young men had drawn chairs up to a
neighboring window, and were lazily smoking
their cigars and conversing in tones loud
enough for me to hear. As they laughed and
chatted, the name of Johnson Kyle fell from
the lips of one of them, and it was this that
had aroused me from my study.

"I say, Kyle, that is what I would consider
a streak of remarkably good luck. Of course
a few more thousands don't seem much to you,
but the girl?"

"Ah, the ancient maiden lady? Excuse me,
old fellow, if you please. The other is
bad enough, but I shall certainly lay no claim
to the calico incumbrance, whatever I may do
about the other."

I glanced cautiously at the speaker. He sat
facing me almost, and I read him through.
He was a young man, apparently not more
than thirty, with fair, but slightly bronzed
face, deep blue eyes, tawny mustache, and
light curling hair. He was dressed in the
height of fashion, and his frank, honest coun-
tenance struck me at once favorably.

"You talk as if the legacy was but a mere
trifle which you intended to let go by default,"
answered his companion.

"Justice is justice, my dear major," an-
swered Kyle. "I never could understand
why my father's old friend should prefer me
to his own flesh and blood. If, by accepting
that bequest, I do injustice to a woman, be
she ever so old or ugly, I could not touch a
dollar of it."

I felt like flinging my arms around the neck
of this young man. But my usual caution
came to the rescue, and the doubt followed—
"That sounds very well, but he may be only
acting; we'll see." So I said to myself, and
the crowd in the room prevented my hearing
anything further of their conversation.

I never mentioned what I had overheard in
this hotel conversation to any person, but it
had given me a clue to the actual condition
of affairs, and filled me with the hope that a com-
promise might be eventually made that would
result in great benefit to my lovely client.
Yet it would not do for me to evince any weak-
ness if the case came to trial, though what hope
there was of breaking the will of Johnson Gar-
nett I could not tell.

The day of final hearing came at last. The
last demurrer had been argued, the last mo-
tion had been overruled, and I found my ut-
most efforts to clog and delay the case were un-
availing. Leex and Brief were exulting and
anxious to close the case, and had spent their
legal cunning to push me to the wall. Nothing
was left for me but to seem equally anx-
ious to enter trial, and so the case was called.

I looked in vain for my lovely client. What
could have detained her? Surely she would be
here in time; the witnesses were present and
all was ready.

I must fight for delay. All my energy was
bent upon this object. Accordingly I hin-
dered the impaneling of the jury by every
legal objection, and thus gained some time.
Still Alda Garnett had not arrived.

A glance at Leex and Brief showed me that
they, too, were exceedingly uneasy, and I ob-
served that their client was also missing. The
court-room was crowded with spectators for
the case was one that interested the entire
community, and much indignation had been
vented on the injustice done Alda Garnett by
her father in so summarily disposing of his
property to a stranger.

The jury being at length made up, and the
affirmative of the case given to the defendant;
the will was produced and pompously read to
the jury by Leex, of counsel for the defense.
Witnesses were then called and examined, and
the identity of the will fully proven, where-
upon the defendants rested their case.

At this juncture a commotion was visible
among the bystanders, and soon from the
crowd a lady, leaning on the arm of a gentle-
man, advanced.

It was Alda Garnett with Johnson Kyle!
Leex and Brief were astonished beyond
measure, while I could scarcely repress a smile
of delight, for to me it was a good omen.

Seating Miss Garnett by my side, Johnson
Kyle shook hands with his counsel, Leex and
Brief, and by them was duly introduced to
me. The jury and spectators shared the gen-
eral feeling of astonishment, and while many
glowered at the young man, whom they could
but consider a usurper, others seemed to ad-
mire his handsome and manly bearing.

Of course a consultation was called, and all
the parties and their attorneys retired to an
adjoining room.

"Gentlemen," said Johnson Kyle, "this suit
is to go no further."

Leex and Brief looked more nonplussed than
ever.

I glanced at Alda Garnett and a delicate
blush suffused her cheek as her eyes met mine
and saw the look of delight I could not re-
press.

"This lady," resumed Kyle, taking the hand
of Alda in his own, "and I have effected a
compromise. Allow me, gentlemen, to pre-
sent my affianced bride."

"Of course we heartily congratulated the
young couple, and both Brief and Leex ex-
pressed themselves as highly pleased with the
terms of settlement."

Again we entered the crowded court-room,
and I addressed the court:

"Your Honor, I am pleased to announce that
this case is compromised to the entire satis-
faction of all parties. We will, therefore, with
your Honor's permission, withdraw a juror
and consider this case dismissed."

As soon as the true condition of affairs be-
came known, the spectators could scarcely be
prevented from giving a shout of approbation.
As it was they crowded about us, and sought
to congratulate the young stranger and his
beautiful affianced.

Order was at length restored, and the busi-
ness of court resumed.

Gathered in my little office was a happy
group. Alda, leaning on the arm of the hand-
some Johnson Kyle, seemed filled with true
happiness.

"Tell me, you truant," I asked, assuming a
tone of comic severity to Alda, "why you thus
interrupt our legal proceedings?"

Laughingly she rejoined:

"Ask Mr. Kyle; he is responsible."

"True," said Kyle; "I arrived here two
weeks ago and went out to Emerald Hill to
view my new possession, and interview the
ancient maiden lady whom I supposed to be
a legal opponent. You can judge of my sur-
prise at meeting Miss Garnett, here, and we
were soon on such good terms that the com-
promise we have just effected was agreed upon,
and, in exchange for my interest in that will,
she gave me—herself."

"But your part of the exchange?" I suggested.

"Here it is," said he, producing the will,
"and here is its entire fulfillment," and, say-
ing this, he proceeded to tear the document in-
to shreds.

"And now, gentlemen," he resumed, in his
blandest manner, "allow me, in behalf of Miss
Garnett, and also as my own earnest wish, to
invite you all to our wedding at Emerald Hill
next Thursday evening."

We all went to the wedding, and I was the
humble instrument chosen to give away the
bride. Alda Garnett had won her own case,
and conquered her opponent with a few glances
from those splendid eyes.

We attorneys were handsomely feed, of
course, and the unjust will was effectually
broken.

An April Fool.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

KATE RAYNESFORD heard a girl's light-heart-
ed laugh as she sat beside the window in the
early dusk of the March day, and a cold, hard
look came into her face.

"That is Lettie Crawford's laugh, I know,"
she said, pulling back the curtain to get a view
of the street. "I should know it anywhere,
because it always affects me so disagreeably."

A young man was coming up the street, and
a girl was walking with him. The scowl upon
Miss Raynesford's face grew darker.

"It is she, and Ralph Tyrrell is with her,"
she said, peering out into the dusky twilight.
"The little fool! I wonder if she thinks she
can catch him?"

As there was no one to answer Miss Raynes-
ford's question, it remained unanswered.

"I wonder people don't begin to talk about
the way she carries on," said Miss Raynesford,
to herself, by-and-by, the scowl still on her
face. "Of course no one is fool enough to
think he cares for her, unless she does; and as
long as it can't end in marriage, I should think
people would notice how she tries to keep him
at her elbow, and smiles at him in her most be-
witching way every time they meet. I think
it really ridiculous, and I wish some one would
tell her how such conduct appears to respecta-
ble people."

Miss Raynesford was like a great many men
and women who I know, ready to condemn
other people for doing precisely what they
would do themselves; and the principal reason
why they condemn their fellows, as a general
thing, is because they have succeeded where
the fault-finders failed.

Miss Raynesford had tried to keep Ralph
Tyrrell at her side, and failed to do so. Let-
tie Crawford had never attempted anything of
the kind, because there was no need of it.
He seemed perfectly willing to stay, without
her trying to keep him.

I don't think Lettie thought anything about
what his intentions were. She believed him
to be a gentleman, she liked him, and she was
not foolish enough to keep him at a frigid dis-
tance because she was a poor girl and worked
for her living. She was a pure, womanly woman,
and as such, fit for the society of any
man. Therefore she met Ralph Tyrrell and
associated with him as his equal. But to Miss
Raynesford the fact that she worked for her
bread was enough to keep her out of good so-
ciety. The chief reason for Miss Raynesford's
dislike, however, was that the man she would
have been glad to marry saw more to admire
in Lettie than herself—which, to an unpreju-
diced observer, was a proof of his good sense.

"Say, Kate," called out Miss Raynesford's
brother Ned, bursting into the room like a
gust of wind. "Isn't it almost April Fool
day?"

"To-day's Tuesday," said Miss Raynesford.
"Friday is the first of April. Yes, it's almost
time for April fools."

When Ned had gone a brilliant idea came
to her. Why couldn't she take advantage of
the first day of something to make Lettie
Crawford ridiculous? If she could do anything
to discredit her rival she felt it to be almost
a religious duty to do so.

"I know what I'll do," she said, after an
hour of study as to the best means of accom-
plishing her plan. "He has a new office down-
town, and I don't believe she knows where it
is. I'll write to her to call there on Friday;
tell her that it will be for her advantage to do
so. She'll go, and he will think it a use on
her part, got up for the express purpose of an
excuse for coming there, and when he sees how
unwomanly such conduct is, he'll be apt to
think less of you, Miss Lettie Crawford."

Which you will see does not exactly tally
with Miss Raynesford's statement, that "of
course he didn't care anything for Lettie." If
she had been quite sure of that, she would have
felt much easier about the matter.

The next day she wrote the letter that was
to make Lettie Crawford ridiculous, requesting
her to call at 25 Brown street, at ten o'clock
on Friday; first door to the right, up stairs.

"I hope it is for copying," said Lettie to
her mother, when she had read the letter.
"I could do a good deal at that evenings."

Friday came, and Lettie never once thought
about its being April Fool Day. She went
down the street past Miss Raynesford's, and
saw that young lady smiling at her, as she
passed. But the smile wasn't a very friendly
one.

She knocked at the "first door to the right,
up stairs," and a pleasant voice called "Come
in."

She opened the door and entered the room.
She had expected to find a dusty law-office, or
something of that sort; instead she found her-
self in a doctor's office, and Ralph Tyrrell
looking at her in astonishment.

"Why, Lettie, is it really you?" he ex-
claimed, in delight, rushing about to get her a
chair; "I never dreamed of seeing you here.
You are well, I hope? Sit down, do."

"I came in answer to your letter," said
Lettie, blushing, and feeling, she could not
tell why, as if there was some mistake back of
it all. "I didn't know that it was from you,
though."

"My letter?" repeated young Doctor Tyr-
rell. "I haven't written you any letter. I
don't know what you mean."

"Didn't you write to me to call here at ten
o'clock to-day, and promise work? I supposed
it was from some lawyer, who wanted copying
done! Here is the letter. You can read it."

Lettie gave him the letter, and sat there in
considerable embarrassment while he was
reading it. If he didn't write it, who did?

"I see through it all, I think," he said, as
he folded it up, and gave it back to her.

"This is the first of April, you know."

"No, I didn't know it," exclaimed Lettie,
indignantly. "I'd like to know who could be
mean enough to play such a trick on me!" and
then she burst into tears. What could he
think of her! And yet he couldn't blame her,
after all, for she had taken the letter in good
faith. But that didn't prevent her position
from being very embarrassing.

"